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| 1 | BEFORE THE | | |
| | ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION | | |
| 2 | PUBLIC FORUM | | |
| 3 | CENTRAL ILLINOIS LIGHT COMPANY |) | DOCKET NO. |
| | d/b/a AmerenCILCO |) | 07-0585 |
| | |) | |
| 4 | Proposed general increase in |) | |
| | electric delivery service rates. |) | |
| 5 | |) | |
| | CENTRAL ILLINOIS PUBLIC SERVICE |) | DOCKET NO. |
| 6 | COMPANY d/b/a AmerenCIPS |) | 07-0586 |
| | |) | |
| 7 | Proposed general increase in |) | |
| | electric delivery service rates. |) | |
| 8 | |) | |
| | ILLINOIS POWER COMPANY d/b/a |) | DOCKET NO. |
| 9 | AmerenIP |) | 07-0587 |
| | |) | |
| 10 | Proposed general increase in |) | |
| | electric delivery service rates. |) | |
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| | CENTRAL ILLINOIS LIGHT COMPANY |) | DOCKET NO. |
| 12 | d/b/a AmerenCILCO |) | 07-0588 |
| | |) | |
| 13 | Proposed general increase in gas |) | |
| | delivery service rates. |) | |
| 14 | |) | |
| | CENTRAL ILLINOIS PUBLIC SERVICE |) | DOCKET NO. |
| 15 | COMPANY d/b/a AmerenCIPS |) | 07-0589 |
| | |) | |
| 16 | Proposed general increase in gas |) | |
| | delivery service rates. |) | |
| 17 | |) | |
| | ILLINOIS POWER COMPANY d/b/a |) | DOCKET NO. |
| 18 | AmerenIP |) | 07-0590 |
| | |) | |
| 19 | Proposed general increase in gas |) | |
| | delivery service rates. |) | |
| 20 | Belleville, Illinois | | |
| | Thursday, February 13, 2008 | | |
| 21 | 7:00 p.m. | | |
| 22 | BEFORE: MR. ROBERT BENSKO, Chief Public Forum Officer | | |

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PROCEEDINGS

HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Public Hearing Docket
Number 07-0585-0590, et al.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

It is nice to see you all here tonight. I appreciate
the turnout that we have here tonight. My name is
Robert Bensko and I am the Chief Public Hearing
Officer for the Illinois Commerce Commission. With
me tonight from the Commerce Commission I have the
Bureau Chief of the Public Utilities Division, Gene
Beyer, and Gene is standing outside. He was the
gentleman that was helping anyone that wanted to sign
up tonight sign up. And back in the back of the room
over here I have Beth Bosch. Beth is our Public
Information Officer and she also works in External
Affairs. So if you have a billing or service problem
that you think the Illinois Commerce Commission can
help with, Beth will be more than happy to assist
you.

I want to thank you all for coming
tonight. Seated next to me up here to my left and
your right is a court reporter. And the court

1 reporter will make an accurate record of this
2 evening's proceedings.

3 The subject of this hearing is a
4 proposal to increase rates on the delivery portion of
5 Ameren's electric and natural gas utility business.
6 This public hearing is only one part of the hearing
7 process. There is also a part that's going on in the
8 city of Springfield, and that part consists of an
9 administrative law judge and just like in a court of
10 law, you know, you have two sides. Representing the
11 people in this room -- representing the people in
12 this room are the Staff of the Illinois Commerce
13 Commission. You also have the Attorney General's
14 office and some others. And in that case that we
15 have in Springfield, it is just like in a court of
16 law. Once the case is heard and taken, the
17 Administrative Law Judge presents to the Illinois
18 Commerce Commission -- and the Illinois Commerce
19 Commission is composed of a Chairman and four
20 Commissioners -- he presents that to them and they
21 either vote it up or down or send them back to look
22 at some other subject.

1 When a company comes to the Illinois
2 Commerce Commission and we suspend the case and give
3 it a Docket Number and there is an eleven month clock
4 that goes with that. And that eleven month clock is
5 up on September 30 of this year. So the Commission
6 will have a decision by that time.

7 I run these hearings very openly. And
8 I urge anyone that wants to speak tonight to sign up
9 outside and come up and speak. We at the Commission
10 feel that your comments are very important to us.
11 That's the reasonable why instead of having you be
12 parties to the case or come to Springfield, that's
13 the reason why we come to you. We try to make it as
14 simple as possible.

15 Now, tonight we will have a number
16 of -- I have a number of slips of people that have
17 signed up. I will call your name in the order in
18 which you signed up. What I will ask you to do is
19 come to the microphone. It is in the center of the
20 room here. I want you to state your name and spell
21 it, so that the court reporter has an accurate
22 record.

1 The other thing I want to tell you
2 tonight is, folks, no matter who steps up to that
3 mic, treat them like you would want to be treated
4 yourself. I am not asking you to agree with whatever
5 anyone says tonight; what I am asking you to do is
6 respect the person that's up there. So saying that,
7 I am only going to say that once, and I appreciate
8 anything that -- you know, the considerations that
9 you have tonight.

10 This is the third in a series of six
11 public hearings. We will do three more by the end of
12 February. This hearing is split up into two
13 portions. The first portion is on the record, that
14 the court reporter is going to do. And those are
15 comments, the comments that you make to the
16 Commission. And that record that she is making
17 tonight will be made available to the Chairman and
18 Commissioners and any interested party to the case.

19 Now, if you signed up to speak
20 tonight, you were given a green card. On that green
21 card it just gives you a little bit of information
22 about what I expect if you have signed up. We have

1 some extra cards up here. These green cards that we
2 passed out tonight just tell you what to do when you
3 come up to the mic.

4 They also on the back of those cards
5 have a website at the Illinois Commerce Commission,
6 and it tells you how to follow along the case that is
7 being heard in the city of Springfield. You can do
8 that. Just read the back of the card, log onto the
9 website, and you can follow along.

10 I would like to begin tonight -- I am
11 sorry, the first portion is the on-the-record
12 portion. According to the law there is no cross
13 examination or swearing in of you tonight, so you
14 don't have to be worried about that. Just feel free
15 when I call your name to come up and speak. But the
16 question and answer period cannot be on the record.
17 So we are going to take your comments first, and then
18 we will do a question and answer period after I have
19 released the court reporter. So there will be two
20 parts tonight. I will take a small break.

21 At this time I would like to ask Craig
22 Nelson, he is the Vice President of Regulatory

1 Affairs and Financial Services for Ameren, to come up
2 and explain what the Company is asking of the
3 Commission.

4 Craig.

5 MR. NELSON: Good evening, ladies and
6 gentlemen. And thank you, Mr. Bensko, for the
7 introduction and for making these arrangements. We
8 welcome the opportunity to explain our rate cases.

9 Again, my name is Craig Nelson. I
10 have worked for the Ameren Illinois utilities for
11 more than 28 years now. I brought some people here
12 with me that can help answer your questions, our
13 regulatory people, customer service people and
14 regional operations. We all live in Illinois. We
15 work solely for the Ameren Illinois utilities.

16 And there is some confusion on that
17 issue. Ameren Corp. owns several businesses. One is
18 a Missouri utility. We don't work for that utility.
19 Another is a generating company, the power plants.
20 We don't work for that company. We work for the
21 Ameren Illinois utilities that deliver electricity
22 and gas.

1 And Stan Ogden has some comments that
2 he would like to make, and then I will explain why we
3 are here. I would like you to pay particular
4 attention to what he has to say about rate relief
5 assistance. He has some good information.

6 MR. OGDEN: I am the Vice President of Customer
7 Service and Public Relations.

8 I know when many of you came in
9 tonight, you may have noticed there is a table with
10 customer service co-workers at that table. I would
11 encourage you if you have a specific question about
12 your bill or your circumstance or your situation to
13 please approach them. They can bring up your
14 account. They have got computers here tonight with
15 access to our billing system. We would encourage you
16 to go out and talk with them. And, in fact, at the
17 previous public hearings we have, you know, tried to
18 reach out to people to make sure that they are
19 getting their questions answered.

20 The second item that I would like to
21 talk with you about is the energy assistance dollars
22 that are available. The legislative agreement last

1 year provided assistance dollars available to
2 residential as well as non-residential customers of
3 the Ameren Illinois utilities. Specifically, there
4 are millions of dollars available for energy
5 assistance.

6 Usually when you hear energy
7 assistance, you think of it being for the low income.
8 Well, there are special hardship dollars available
9 for low income, but in addition it goes up to 400
10 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. And just
11 to kind of give you a frame of reference of what that
12 means, if you are husband and wife, a family of two,
13 and you are making \$55,000 a year or less, you could
14 be eligible for some of the special hardship dollars.
15 A family of four, that goes up to \$82,000 or less
16 annual income. So there are dollars available and I
17 really encourage you to pursue that.

18 And I know that those of you who feel
19 like, you know, I am not asking for help, I don't
20 want to ask for help, these are dollars that I am
21 going to be extremely disappointed if they go unused.
22 They must be used. We are using this forum to

1 identify those funds that are available and encourage
2 you to pursue those.

3 It is our intent to find ways to help
4 make the energy affordable. We realize the prices
5 have increased dramatically in 2007. And in addition
6 to the assistance dollars, there is programs like
7 Warm Neighbors that have assistance dollars
8 available. In addition, we are pursuing energy
9 efficiency measures. You will be hearing more about
10 those later this year. And with our gas rate case
11 filing, we have gas energy efficiency programs that
12 we are also looking to promote. And again you will
13 be hearing more about those. June 1 is when the
14 electric energy efficiency programs will be launched,
15 and I know you will be hearing more about those in
16 the coming months.

17 The bottom line to my opening comments
18 is this. We at Ameren Illinois utilities do not want
19 customers having to make decisions between
20 prescription drugs, groceries and paying their energy
21 bill. We encourage you to look to us, call us.
22 There is a brochure that discusses some of the

1 programs that are available.

2 So with that, I would like to turn it
3 back over to Craig, and I will go through the first
4 slide here of our commitment to you. Our commitment
5 is to provide cost-efficient, reliable and safe
6 service to our customers. We also want to achieve
7 high levels of customer satisfaction. I know we have
8 to earn that from you, and we have got an uphill
9 battle to do that, but that's our intention.

10 With that, thank you, and I will give
11 it back to Craig.

12 MR. NELSON: Thanks, Dan. Next slide.

13 We filed rate cases with the Illinois
14 Commerce Commission last November, and we are here
15 tonight to talk about those rate cases, explain why
16 we need an increase, discuss the benefits of this
17 rate increase and these rate cases to you, listen to
18 your comments, and then we have got a panel to answer
19 your questions later.

20 Let's start with our service territory
21 and some more information about our Ameren Illinois
22 utilities. There are three of them. You can see in

1 the red CILCO, in the yellow gold-ish color CIPS and
2 then, of course, IP in the green. All three of them
3 have been around about a hundred years. We serve 85
4 of the 102 counties in Illinois, 1.2 million electric
5 customers, 840,000 gas customers.

6 And then it is important that you know
7 that our three utilities do not own power plants and
8 we do not own natural gas production wells. So that
9 means that we have to buy electricity and natural gas
10 from the market. And we only buy the amount of
11 electricity and gas that you use, and there is no
12 profit on that piece. Whatever we pay for
13 electricity and gas, that's what we charge you.

14 Instead, we are here to talk about the
15 delivery service component of the bill, and that's
16 where we make a profit. We try to recover our costs
17 for delivering electricity and gas and earn a fair
18 return, and that's what we are talking about today.

19 Before I get into the explanation,
20 let's talk about the rate relief legislation that was
21 passed this last summer and how it relates to these
22 rate cases. We reached agreement with lawmakers to

1 provide a significant amount of rate relief, in fact,
2 488 million over four years in credits and other
3 programs, and Stand described some of those. And
4 that agreement, looking on the top row, relates to
5 power purchases, and I will explain more later.

6 Last summer we told lawmakers when we
7 were negotiating that we would be filing these
8 delivery service rate cases, distinguishing delivery
9 services from power purchases. We told lawmakers we
10 would file these. And we also promised lawmakers
11 last summer that the increases would be in the single
12 digit range for electric residential, meaning not ten
13 percent and not more. In fact, we capped the IP
14 increase at eight and a half percent for the electric
15 residential segment. We kept our word. We did
16 exactly what we said we would do.

17 To help understand this rate case,
18 let's go to this dollar slide. And when we get a
19 dollar of revenue from our customers, what does it go
20 for? What do we spend it on? So let's go through
21 the three segments. \$.42 goes to the purchase of
22 electricity, and the next one, \$.22 for the purchase

1 of natural gas. And let's stop there a moment.

2 Remember I just said that those two are not what this
3 rate case is about. That's something separate. And
4 whatever we pay for electricity and natural gas, we
5 pass those costs on to you. There is no profit.

6 Then remember I talked about the rate
7 relief legislation, and on the far left you see the
8 purchase of electricity, the 488 million of credits
9 relates to the purchase of electricity, not natural
10 gas and not delivery service.

11 What we filed with the ICC is the one
12 on the right. And assuming that the ICC were to
13 approve everything we asked, we would have \$.36 of
14 each dollar for providing delivery services. And
15 that's our operating costs, maintenance costs, taxes,
16 interest and a fair return. When I say fair return,
17 what we are asking for is a return that's similar to
18 what other utilities earn.

19 We know times are tough. We know no
20 one likes price increases. I know I don't like price
21 increases. See my daughter there, she doesn't like
22 price increases. However, after we carefully weighed

1 our options, we thought it was in the best interest
2 of our stakeholders, including our customers, to file
3 these delivery service rate cases. And we asked for
4 an increase in our revenues and we asked for a seven
5 percent overall increase, seven percent. And I will
6 explain why we did that very soon.

7 Of course, when we ask for an increase
8 in revenue, that impacts your bill. So I have got
9 two slides that explain that impact. And the first
10 slide is a combination customer, and we stated the
11 assumptions on there. We think this is a typical
12 combination customer, one that uses electricity and
13 gas. We know that not everyone is typical. And this
14 shows the monthly adjustment on the bill, the monthly
15 increase, and we know that month by month usage will
16 vary. But you have to state your assumptions.

17 Assuming the Commerce Commission would
18 approve for an increase, if you look at the AmerenIP
19 box over on the right, you will see the electric
20 portion of the bill would go up by \$7.75 a month and
21 the natural gas by \$8.67 a month. And let's go to
22 all electric, the next slide. Again a typical all

1 electric customer, one that does not use natural gas,
2 heats with electric, we know nobody is typical, month
3 by month will vary, but in this case it is 11.33
4 increase, assuming the ICC approves it all.

5 Now, Stan did mention that we are
6 rolling out in June, Stan, electric energy efficiency
7 programs to help you lower your bills, and as part of
8 this rate case we are offering gas energy efficiency
9 programs to help you lower your bills.

10 I am sure since most of you are IP
11 customers you are wondering why the IP increase is
12 greater than the other two. And it's because the
13 increase in the IP operating costs were greater than
14 the other two. What we have asked for in this rate
15 case is to recover our actual 2006 operating costs.
16 The increase was greater in IP than the other two
17 because the new owner, the Ameren Illinois utilities,
18 is spending more on reliability, customer service and
19 maintenance and so on than the previous owner did.
20 We have also conformed IP's appreciation rates to the
21 other utilities and resulted in more expense.

22 So why do we need this rate increase?

1 Next slide. As I said, we are trying to recover our
2 2006 actual costs. Our costs have increased since
3 then, but that's the case we filed, the actual cost
4 of operating the delivery companies, the operations,
5 maintenance, interest, taxes, the dollars we spend
6 for operating the delivery companies. And we have
7 converted that into a rate case and the ICC is
8 reviewing right now to see if they agree with that
9 amount. Traditionally, they have not agreed with the
10 full amount and have ratcheted it down some.

11 We believe a rate increase is
12 necessary to enhance reliability of service. Our
13 service reliability, as Mr. Ogden talked to you
14 about, has improved in '04 to '06. We want that
15 trend to continue. We have heard it from our
16 customers. You don't like when the lights go out.

17 We want to continue investing in our
18 delivery service system, our electric and gas
19 delivery system. We have to have more dollars to do
20 that. And then you will see an important one; we
21 want to lower our costs of borrowing money. Right
22 now our bonds, that's how we borrow money, are rated

1 as junk bonds because of our political regulatory
2 business risk. We would like to restore our bond
3 ratings back to investment grade. That would lower
4 our interest costs, lower other borrowing costs, and
5 that would help you, too.

6 And, finally, I mentioned fair return.
7 We think a rate increase is necessary so our three
8 utilities can earn a return similar to what other
9 utilities are earning. The problem is the present
10 rates are not adequate to do these four things.

11 Along the cost increase subject, be
12 very brief, we are spending more on reliability
13 projects. We are spending more on tree trimming.
14 And you will note up there, you know, the basic
15 materials we use to repair the system and build the
16 system, poles, wire, gas pipe, and you notice the
17 percentage increases. And this is not -- this is
18 from 2004 to 2006. This is what we actually paid.

19 And this is not insignificant. Diesel
20 fuel, for instance, we buy 1.6 million gallons per
21 year. And wire and cable, we buy 1600 miles of that
22 a year, and the cost is up 30 percent. Gas pipe, we

1 lay 230 miles a year of that. We also intend and
2 would like to spend almost \$500 million on our
3 electric and gas delivery system. So our costs are
4 up, plus we need to copy investing more in the system
5 to keep reliability up.

6 Let's go to the next. There are
7 benefits to customers with this rate increase.
8 Enhanced reliability, it would mean fewer outages and
9 when those outages occur, shorter outages. So that's
10 what we are trying to do.

11 We are trying to improve customer
12 service. As I talked about, we keep investing in the
13 delivery system so reliability stays up. We have
14 made significant investments in past years. We want
15 to invest even more in the system in future years. I
16 am going to talk to you about bringing our bond
17 ratings back to investment grade, lowering the
18 interest costs. And if you look at that fourth
19 photo, that's the benefit for you. If we do that, it
20 will help us lower the next rate increase request,
21 because our interest cost will be tens of millions of
22 dollars less and the cost of purchasing service will

1 be less.

2 And, finally, remember Stan said that
3 our customer service workers are out there. They can
4 help you with your billing problems. They can help
5 you find the millions of dollars in rate relief money
6 that has not been spent and is available, and our
7 commitment to you is to provide safe, reliable,
8 cost-efficient service and a high level of customer
9 satisfaction.

10 So thank you.

11 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you.

12 Folks, I am going to start calling the
13 names on the list. I am going to ask you for one
14 thing. When the person is up here speaking, the
15 court reporter has to record what that person is
16 saying. If she can't understand what people are
17 saying because other people are talking over whoever
18 is standing up at the mic, that's going to do our
19 record absolutely no good. So, please, give whoever
20 is speaking first, whoever is speaking, let them
21 speak and hold your comments to yourself, and then we
22 will have the question and answer period after the

1 first portion.

2 MS. PASCHEDAG: My name is

3 Amy Paschedag, P as in Paul A-S-C-H-E-D-A-G.

4 Good evening, representatives of the
5 Illinois Commerce Commission and residents of
6 southern Illinois. My name is Amy Paschedag, and I
7 represent AARP and the 1.8 million members in
8 Illinois.

9 AARP is alarmed by the continued
10 efforts by the Illinois utilities, Ameren and ComEd,
11 to increase energy prices. Last year AARP worked
12 with the Attorney General, the Citizens Utility Board
13 and the Illinois General Assembly to over run the
14 electric rate auction and end the skyrocketing
15 increases it created. As a result, one billion
16 dollars was provided by Ameren and ComEd for rate
17 relief and a new electricity procurement process was
18 implemented. AARP members across the state fought
19 hard for that victory. Now these increases will move
20 to eliminate it.

21 Ameren seems to be at it again,
22 requesting nearly a quarter of a billion dollars

1 increase in its Ameren delivery charge for both
2 electric and natural gas customers. To make matters
3 worse, Ameren proposes to collect some of these new
4 charges through the use of so-called riders of
5 surcharges.

6 One of Ameren's proposed riders is so
7 called uncollectibles. Under this rider all
8 customers would pay a surcharge to cover the
9 shortfall created by those customers who are unable
10 to afford their higher utility bills in the first
11 place. In addition, they also want a rider for
12 natural gas customers. That would charge customers
13 for delivery of gas they never received. They call
14 this decoupling. We call it wrong.

15 Riders create a fast track for Ameren
16 rate increases, without the benefit of looking at the
17 Company's overall revenue to see if there are
18 offsetting decreases. They unfairly shift the risk
19 onto customers by allowing these unfair increases
20 outside of a rate case audit.

21 Illinois consumers deserve better.
22 Deregulation has already exacted a high toll on

1 consumers. By creating a fast track to higher rates
2 and riders, Ameren is proposing to go down the failed
3 deregulation path once again. The Commission must
4 protect consumers by rejecting riders and Ameren's
5 larger attempt to siphon off much of the hard fought
6 and won one billion dollars out of consumers'
7 pockets.

8 The simple truth is that working
9 people, families, retirees, small business owners
10 cannot afford to pay these ever skyrocketing energy
11 bills. On average, families spend a greater share of
12 their income on utility costs than on any other
13 necessities. For older adults, their share of
14 utility services can be as high as 24 percent of
15 their monthly income. This means many will be forced
16 to choose between paying their utility bill, rent,
17 buying food or prescription drugs. We all know that
18 this increase will not just be residential customers.
19 They will pay the increase over and over and over
20 again as costs go up for small business and service
21 providers.

22 AARP urges the Illinois Commerce

1 Commission to do the right thing. Reject Ameren's
2 request. Further, AARP urges the Commission to
3 reject riders which amount to nothing more than
4 slipping in undue and unfair increases for consumers.
5 The approval of Ameren's delivery service increase
6 and these riders will put the health, safety and
7 financial security of residential customers at risk.

8 Thank you.

9 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Amy.

10 Folks, I just counted how many have
11 signed up to speak tonight. We have 60. And so what
12 I am going to ask you to do is try and keep it within
13 two minutes.

14 Brad Van Hoose.

15 MR. VAN HOOSE: It's Van Hoose. Is this
16 attached here? Because I would like to address the
17 crowd.

18 My name is Brad Van Hoose, for the
19 record. I live on South McKinley Drive in
20 Belleville, Illinois. My last name is spelled V as
21 in Victor, A-N, capital H-O-O-S-E. I will make it as
22 brief as possible, but I do have a small presentation

1 to make, and I will give courtesy to those behind me.

2 First of all -- we don't have a
3 signal. Well, of course, I guess we have to point it
4 this way to make it work.

5 It is nice to see such a big turn out
6 here tonight. I don't need that microphone.

7 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Well, sir, she does.

8 MR. VAN HOOSE: Oh, I am sorry, Mr. Renfro, I
9 apologize.

10 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: What this gentleman
11 back here is trying to tell you is that if you don't
12 touch the mic, then it will be fine.

13 MR. VAN HOOSE: I apologize. I am not a
14 polished public speaker.

15 I came tonight with a lot of passion.
16 First of all, before I go any further I will tell you
17 how I feel I am entitled to be here tonight. Myself
18 with the help of some friends have collected over
19 8,000 signatures to oppose this rate hike from most
20 of the folks in the metro-east area. We have had a
21 lot of help, and I appreciate Jean Edwards and
22 Leonard Black and the Caseyville senior citizens for

1 their assistance in this endeavor. I couldn't have
2 done it by myself.

3 I come here tonight because I feel
4 like I am a victim of --

5 Are we okay now?

6 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Hold on.

7 MR. VAN HOOSE: I would like to talk to you
8 folks. That's what I came to do.

9 I would address the ICC, but I would
10 object --

11 I am sure, Mr. Renfro, you are a very
12 important person with the Commission, but it would
13 have been nice to have the Commission or some of the
14 Commissioners here this evening themselves. I don't
15 believe that they are that high and mighty that they
16 couldn't be here to discuss these issues with the
17 people that they are supposedly looking out for.

18 I come here tonight because I feel
19 like I am the victim of a very large compromise. I
20 saw this huge jump in increase in rates just like the
21 rest of you did last year. Basically, my rate went
22 from \$.07 to \$.14 a kilowatt which is a dead-on one

1 hundred percent increase.

2 We are here -- normally, I am not the
3 kind of person that would even bring my problems to
4 government or ask them to solve my problems, because
5 when it comes to consumer services, when I am
6 unhappy, I just generally find another provider. I
7 am very unique, though, here because I really have no
8 choices, and the choices that I have are so limited.
9 Ameren has effectively so cut back the competition
10 that there are no real choices that I am aware of.

11 Has anyone else found any?

12 AUDIENCE: No.

13 MR. VAN HOOSE: Okay. Anyway, these gentlemen
14 here from Ameren, and I think these folks here are
15 too, they come here with their hat in their hand,
16 they use no syllables and they don't talk very loud,
17 and they do their very best to sound like they are
18 Baptist ministers and people looking out for your
19 best interests. But don't be fooled by that.

20 These gentlemen here have threatened
21 litigation against the State of Illinois if we roll
22 back the rates and renegotiate the terms. They have

1 threatened layoffs of employees as opposed to middle
2 managers, and they have also let us know in no
3 uncertain terms that our service just won't be as
4 reliable. And I guess we need those signs on the
5 sides of their trucks to be assured that that's the
6 case.

7 One of the -- I feel let down by my
8 legislators. I feel like I am a victim of corporate
9 greed here, but I expect corporate greed. I have
10 been let down and, of course, you can't blame a
11 corporation. They do what they do. And you don't
12 blame a wolf for hunting. It hunts. But we rely on
13 the Illinois Commerce Commission and our legislators
14 to stand up for us and be watch dogs and not lap
15 dogs.

16 The one question I have, one of the
17 questions -- I have many but I will be brief because
18 there are others behind me -- why did the Illinois
19 Commerce Commission or our state legislators allow
20 Ameren to basically acquire all three downstate
21 energy providers in basically one fell swoop. If the
22 whole idea behind the '97 deregulation was to foster

1 competition, we basically allowed Ameren to wipe it
2 out, and then basically we are at their mercy.

3 I also have questions about the rate
4 relief bill. We have formed a new agency called the
5 Illinois Power Accord. \$25 million of your money and
6 my money was taken out of our rate relief bill to
7 fund this whatever entity that has yet to be
8 explained to me. But what I want to know, for one
9 thing, is it going to cost \$25 million annually,
10 because my rate relief check was one-time money with
11 no assurances of rate fairness or rate of anything.
12 We got nothing in that rate relief bill, absolutely
13 nothing.

14 AUDIENCE: A joke.

15 MR. VAN HOOSE: A joke, very good, sir.

16 But is there going to be one-time
17 funding? Who pays for the Illinois Power authority
18 and how does it really save us as consumers a penny
19 going forward. I have yet to hear a good answer for
20 that.

21 I also would like to note that in a
22 period from June 15 of 2003 to January 1st of 2005,

1 as this rate freeze ended and Ameren ramped up the
2 rates and moved towards getting this increase, Ameren
3 donated \$1.3 million statewide in Illinois campaign
4 contributions. It is very hard for me as a consumer
5 to feel like my lawmakers are acting in my best
6 interest when a company like Ameren is greasing the
7 wheel like they have done so.

8 I attended the big hoedown down in
9 East St. Louis, Ameren, when they announced the rate
10 relief bill. The question I asked Mr. Pate sitting
11 right there was why did Ameren feel the need to give
12 so much money to so many politicians. And his answer
13 to my question was "No comment." Is that his answer
14 tonight?

15 Anyway, as far as before Ameren comes
16 asking me for any more money, I think they could cut
17 down on the lobbyists they hire and their management.
18 How many lobbyists does Ameren employ? I think there
19 is a lot of ways to -- does Karen Foss operate a
20 chain saw or climb a tree? And why does Ameren feel
21 the need to put this sign in left center field in a
22 ballpark, a place of sanctity that I love to go to.

1 I can't even stand to go to a ball game and look at
2 that damn Ameren sign in left center field. It has
3 just ruined baseball for me.

4 Anyway, I will move on here. My last
5 comment to the Illinois Commerce Commission and my
6 legislators is in the past we have dealt with Ameren
7 much the way we have dealt like with a former partner
8 or a friend in our community. And I urge this
9 Commission, the Illinois Commerce Commission, to
10 stand with the stubbornness and pride of the lady,
11 Rosa Parks, and the militant vigilance of a man named
12 King. I think you need to stand up for us and fight
13 for our interest, because we are the people that do
14 fund the Illinois Commerce Commission, and you
15 weren't designed to protect Ameren Corporation or
16 Exelon or ComEd or any of these nameless, faceless
17 providers that are making our rates go through the
18 roof and making folks make a decision between heat,
19 eat or medicate.

20 Thank you very much.

21 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Brad.

22 Sally D-A-R-Y, I think it is.

1 MS. DAVY: It's Sally Davy, D-A-V-Y. You can
2 probably spell Sally, right?

3 Okay, first of all, the more you talk,
4 the madder I got. Reliability? I have lived, or my
5 mother has, in the same house for 68 years. And I
6 have had more power outages in the last three or four
7 years than I had all the other 63 years before that.
8 How many other people have had the same? And you
9 call that reliable.

10 Now, I realize you can't put all the
11 lines underground all at once. But several years
12 back they just redid all of East Main Street. You
13 had to move all your power poles because they widened
14 the street. That would have been a perfect time to
15 go underground in that area. There is no reason why
16 when you redo things, you can't redo at that time.

17 Now, you talk about all this silly
18 creative figuring you people do. There has got to be
19 a reason, if you can give all these millions back and
20 you call it energy assistance, if you can give all
21 those millions back, you wouldn't have needed to get
22 it in the first place. Somehow or another you are

1 making a lot of money on that.

2 Now, I make \$35 a year too much to go
3 on Circuit Breaker. One month of power bills wipes
4 that out and more. My power bills doubled. And now
5 you want even more. Where am I supposed to get it?
6 What do you guys make a year? Anybody willing to
7 tell me? I will bet not.

8 I think we can solve your whole
9 problem really quick. Just get rid of your CEOs and
10 a couple of your high paid people, and you wouldn't
11 have to charge the rest of us more.

12 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Sally.
13 Sally, I want you to stand up here in front. There
14 are some programs that he would like to talk to you
15 about, and you can go with him outside and he will
16 try and help you with those.

17 Dave Barnes. If I butcher your name
18 tonight, I apologize ahead of time.

19 MR. BARNES: You are all right; you got mine
20 right. Dave, D-A-V-E, Barnes, B-A-R-N-E-S.

21 I am surprised with these numbers that
22 you were talking about losing money, when I have the

1 figures here that says in 2004 you made a profit of
2 530 million. All right. You made a profit in 2005
3 of 660 million. 2006 you made a profit of 547
4 million. The figures aren't out for 2007 yet. So
5 when you are saying you have this money to give away,
6 to give back, and it is breaking your heart that you
7 can't give it back, send it back to us. It is not
8 going to hurt us at all. You know, when you are
9 saying you are losing money, where does this money
10 come from? The profit?

11 Your CEO, one of them made -- your top
12 executive salary was 800,000, but he got a bonus of
13 \$986,000. That's a pretty good bonus. That's that
14 rate relief you are talking about, doubling the
15 payroll.

16 Thank you.

17 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you.

18 Mark Burk, I think.

19 MR. BURK: Mark Burk, M-A-R-K, B-U-R-K. I
20 would just like to thank you for letting us have this
21 opportunity to speak our piece tonight.

22 I would like to ask a question. What

1 happened to government? Government was elected from
2 the beginning to look after the best interests of
3 people. In big government we don't see it, and now
4 when we get down to the peons and the lower estates,
5 we don't have any there. And I asked at Ameren, what
6 happened to just looking at people as a whole and
7 saying when is enough enough. I mean, how much money
8 do we have to make and how many elderly people do we
9 have to kill by either freezing them out or just
10 breaking them completely because they are too proud
11 to ask for help. And you just run them in the ground
12 because you can.

13 I am confused. This is America. This
14 isn't the Soviet Union or Iraq to where we just
15 dictate what we want. But, you know, I think we are
16 really coming to that because when the lobbyists are
17 allowed to dictate in the states and the federal
18 governments, the money is so overwhelming that the
19 people that we elect don't do what we ask because
20 they don't have to.

21 And all I ask is that the Commission
22 go back to what they were put into place to do and

1 represent the people, look at what the economy is
2 doing right now. The people are starving. They are
3 freezing to death. Things aren't good. But if you
4 look at the profits of big business, they are
5 outrageous.

6 And all I ask is when is enough
7 enough. Because the final say isn't going to come
8 from the people sitting here. All we can do is
9 voice. We elect you and put you where you needed to
10 be, and all I ask is that you, the Commerce, do what
11 we put you there to do and do the right thing, not
12 what you are being paid to do from somebody else who
13 does not want to look at the best interests of the
14 people of the state of Illinois. And that's all I
15 ask.

16 Thank you.

17 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Roger Wilson.

18 MR. WILSON: I pass. They said it all.

19 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: The next one I can't
20 read at all. Jim, and he lives at 2 Dixon Court or
21 something like that?

22 MR. WIEGERS: My penmanship is a lot worse than

1 what my speech is. Name is Jim Wiegers,
2 W-I-E-G-E-R-S. I am a Belleville resident.

3 These fine people have spoken and said
4 pretty much everything that I think is in most of our
5 hearts, anyway. I haven't done this very often
6 before, but in the last 6-8 weeks I have been to
7 township meetings, to school board meetings, raising
8 taxes, now with Ameren. And Ameren is trying to
9 justify basically another tax. It is not right.

10 What these gentlemen have said before,
11 elderly people can't afford this. They just can't
12 keep going on with it year after year with what's
13 been going on. There has to be some -- some word
14 from the Commission that's going to help prevent some
15 of this, because it can't keep going on.

16 I mean, our country was founded -- you
17 know, basically there was a big tea party that
18 brought taxation without representation. Tea is
19 starting to look very good in these areas. It is a
20 very important aspect.

21 There is many things that could be
22 going on. Just like everybody in the state, the

1 choices that you have to make as you get older, I
2 mean we pay taxes, your utilities and everything
3 else. I mean, you try and justify all this. I wish
4 I was in a position where I could say, all right, I
5 need more money to do this, do that. We will have a
6 little meeting. We will raise taxes. We will do
7 whatever we need, and I am home free. Well, it
8 doesn't work like that for us folks.

9 And you can't make us folks believe
10 that there is not really a mark there that you folks
11 are shooting for that you are trying to say, all
12 right, we didn't get as much as we wanted, but we are
13 going to settle for this amount. Well, that amount
14 that you are settling for is still a hardship for so
15 many people. And it has got to start somewhere,
16 folks. It really does.

17 Thank you.

18 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Jim.

19 August Westbrook.

20 MR. WESTBROOK: August Westbrook, A-U-G-U-S-T,
21 W-E-S-T-B-R-O-O-K. I have an individual case I want
22 to present to you.

1 I am an Ameren retiree. I was very
2 upset by the rate thing that happened at the end of
3 2006 and the beginning of 2007. My bill tripled. I
4 am on a total electric home. The rate before the
5 increase was about \$.03 a kilowatt and after that it
6 was like the \$.09 cents a kilowatt.

7 I am here representing my church
8 tonight. I am not the pastor; I am on some of the
9 committees. Our bill before the increase was running
10 about \$1500 a month. After that, our first one in
11 February of '07 was \$6400. I don't know how many
12 churches -- we struggled with that. We doubled our
13 budget for the year and that still didn't do it. I
14 have our present bill here for the month of January.
15 It was \$6,434, which normally would have been --
16 well, we are all electric.

17 We started the church in 1976. We
18 were advised to go with electric heat, which we did,
19 resistance heat, because it was an advantage to heat
20 with electric, because it would equalize our load
21 during the year in the winter and we would be
22 utilizing some that wouldn't be utilized. And then

1 as far as I am concerned, we got the shaft when the
2 Commerce Commission didn't make them stick to the
3 heat rate, when they changed it in the year 2007.

4 I believe that -- well, I haven't
5 heard anything from the abundance of Ameren
6 representatives we have here tonight about what they
7 are doing to try to minimize their costs. I have
8 heard about all the things they are going to spend it
9 for but not what they want to minimize for. And I
10 agree with the previous gentlemen who told how much
11 money they make. It is almost a sin what they are
12 making. Their corporate structure, the bonuses they
13 give their upper echelon is unbelievable. It is
14 supposed to be a public utility. And you,
15 Mr. Commissioner or representative of the Commission,
16 is supposed to be looking out for the individual
17 person, not the corporate structure. I think it is
18 greed beyond belief.

19 Thank you.

20 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, August.

21 Either it is Bob Lundy? The address
22 is Reamer Court.

1 MR. LINDER: I just got a question.

2 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Spell your name.

3 MR. LINDER: Oh, my name is Bob Linder,

4 L-I-N-D-E-R.

5 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thanks.

6 MR. LINDER: And I was wondering why we can't

7 go back to regulation. This didn't work. It was in

8 the paper and it said, like the politicians said, it

9 didn't work. Why don't we go back to it? And I

10 dabble a little bit in the stock market and I buy

11 Ameren stock. Excellent. It is excellent. So they

12 can't say they aren't making any money. The last

13 five years I think it fluctuates between 44 and 55,

14 something like that, about ten points, and an average

15 five percent interest or dividend. That's pretty

16 good. So how are they saying they are not making any

17 money?

18 And, you know, they say, well, we want

19 to compare ourselves with all the other utilities.

20 Well, if you are doing a bad job and they are doing a

21 good job, we should pay you because they are doing a

22 good job?

1 And that dam broke on that reservoir,
2 all those power outages we had last year. I know
3 some of that can't be helped, but still you think you
4 do a good job? And it was in the paper where they
5 said they didn't make any money for them to give the
6 bonuses to the top guys, but if they took the storm
7 damage out, they could, which they did. So they got
8 their bonuses. And then the top guy said that, well,
9 we are going to do that because the employees, the
10 guys climbing the poles to fix those lines at night,
11 they got overtime, so they got money, well, while the
12 top guys lay in bed waiting for their power to come
13 back on. Now, is that right?

14 You know, at what point do you say
15 this just isn't right? And I am able to pay my bills
16 now, but down the road I am going to retire. And I
17 know people right now that are working, have decent
18 jobs, and yet they cut back on their heating bill,
19 lower their thermostat, to afford it. I mean, it
20 would be different if this was going to be a
21 temporary thing and, okay, six months, a year from
22 now, we will be back to normal. Is this how it is

1 going to be forever, that you can't even heat your
2 house?

3 I mean, everybody wants to make money.
4 I want to make money. It is all about that. But you
5 know what? You are a public utility. It doesn't
6 work like a regular company, and you need to reduce
7 your costs. Instead of saying how your costs are
8 going up, you need to reduce costs.

9 And I think you own Baldwin Power
10 Plant. Well, back in the '60s and '70s I worked at
11 Peabody Coal that supplied coal over there. And in
12 the summer it was always we have to raise the rates
13 because they use more power for the summer air
14 conditioners. Well, while they did that, they also
15 got a big discount on the coal each summer. So it
16 was almost a wash. But the consumer paid more
17 because it was summer time and usage was more. Now,
18 that's a fact. That is probably still happening now
19 with your suppliers.

20 So you have got to be careful how they
21 lay this out on the table, because I guarantee you,
22 you can switch these numbers around any which way.

1 Like I say, we all want to make money, I want to make
2 money. But they are in a little different case than
3 just save your every day business because they are a
4 utility. You can't just go anywhere and buy power.
5 And as we have seen with the power, and it is about
6 the same with the phone companies, it needs to be
7 regulated.

8 The banking system, why are we in such
9 a bad shape now with the banks? They took the
10 regulation off. You can't trust these people. It is
11 greed, and nobody is watching them. They pay the
12 politicians off.

13 Within the last, say, 24 hours gas in
14 these mobile stations here, they went up like \$.25.
15 It was 2.99, then it went to 1.86, then up to 3.09.
16 How did that happen? That gas didn't change one bit
17 in that tank in the station. Where are the people
18 that are supposed to be watching out for us?

19 And Senator Clayborne, why isn't he
20 here tonight? Because you have paid him. You give
21 all this money to these politicians and then you say,
22 well, it is tough. There is no reason you should be

1 paying a single politician or having a commercial on
2 television.

3 And then at the same time when you are
4 holding -- how do you hold the State hostage anyway?
5 That's basically what you are doing. And you are
6 saying if we didn't get our way, you would see
7 layoffs at the bottom line, people actually doing the
8 work. But at the same time you hire Karen Foss. And
9 you think she came cheap? In my opinion she totally
10 lost her credibility as an anchor woman when she
11 could be bought by Ameren. And the only thing --
12 when she comes up to you and says we have been
13 spoiled all along, even before the rate increase I
14 don't think anybody ever thought power was ever real
15 cheap. And nobody is looking technically for cheap
16 power because they know nothing is. But this is
17 obscene.

18 And we don't want all these programs.
19 The government is the same way. As soon as we run
20 into trouble, well, let's get a program. No, that's
21 the trouble. We have got too many programs.

22 AUDIENCE: Fair rates.

1 MR. LINDER: Exactly. Everybody wants to pay
2 their fair share. Nobody wants to come to you and
3 ask for a handout. They are willing to work for it.
4 But they are taking the jobs away, the benefits.
5 Everybody else loses money or they are losing their
6 benefits or a portion. I never hear that from
7 government or people like you. All you do is say,
8 well, we want to get -- we should be -- all the other
9 executives are making \$500,000. So we are at that
10 level, too; we should be making 500,000. Maybe your
11 particular company you work for, since it is a public
12 utility, will not pay that. And if you can go
13 somewhere else and make a million dollars, by all
14 means go there. But if you want to work at Ameren,
15 your job isn't going to pay 500,000, because we have
16 got to spread the costs out to everybody.

17 That's all.

18 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you very much.

19 AUDIENCE: Excuse me. There is a hundred
20 people out here, and we can't hear a word you are
21 saying, not a word. We are very upset about that.
22 Why aren't we in there? Why don't you have a bigger

1 room?

2 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: We have a speaker
3 system out there.

4 AUDIENCE: It doesn't work.

5 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Let the gentleman
6 check on it, please.

7 Joe? Let's wait a second. Let him
8 see if he can fix it.

9 MR. WEST: Sir, I will pass my turn on to
10 somebody else. Thank you.

11 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Joe.
12 Larry Horne? Larry? Horne,
13 H-O-R-N-E.

14 MR. HORNE: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.
15 My name is Larry Horne, H-O-R-N-E.

16 And I would like to just know, the
17 premise for deregulation was to increase competition
18 in the marketplace. So who is Ameren's competition?
19 That's the only question. If there is no
20 competition, then they should go back to regulation,
21 and we won't have all this nonsense. But if they
22 can't have any competition -- which the marketplace,

1 they talk about a free marketplace; there is no such
2 free marketplace in the state of Illinois. And as
3 the ICC, you guys should protect us from a monopoly.
4 It is plain and simple. That's all it is. It is a
5 monopoly.

6 So do the right thing, take the task
7 here, and every thing will be fine and dandy in
8 Illinois.

9 Thank you.

10 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Larry.

11 Chip Shaffer.

12 MR. SHAFFER: It's Chip S-H-A-F-F-E-R.

13 I would like to open with a word of
14 thanks and gratitude for allowing me to speak on
15 behalf of the City of Maroa, the military and their
16 families. In recent months there has been much
17 debate other rate increases and what is the effect
18 with Ameren, and now we are faced with another one.

19 Personally, I think issues account in
20 part why Ameren feels it is necessary to request the
21 latest eight percent increase. When there is a rate
22 increase Ameren may feel it is only a small increase.

1 Yet looking at the big picture, any increase is
2 detrimental to our local economy and its citizens.
3 When rate hikes are approved, they cost -- it affects
4 almost across the board. If it is approved, a store
5 owner is going to have to increase his prices. We
6 all pay. Our school boards will have to raise their
7 property taxes to cover the utility costs to educate
8 our children. Our local government to maintain their
9 business will have to increase our taxes again.
10 Medical costs, another ten percent to cover operating
11 expenses. The list goes on and on and on. This
12 request is not a mere eight percent request for an
13 increase. It is going to hurt us across the board.

14 Currently, the United States military
15 receives a cost of living adjustment based on local
16 area factors, such as fuel prices, food costs and
17 utilities to supplement their housing. When utility
18 rates increase, it may take up to two years for that
19 to be factored into their cost of living. Therefore,
20 they are forced to make do or do without. Our
21 veterans do not receive this benefit. Our senior
22 citizens do not receive this benefit.

1 This year over 2500 Illinois National
2 Guard will deploy to Iraq to fight the war on
3 terrorism. They leave behind jobs. Many of them
4 will take a pay cut, and they leave their families at
5 the mercy of increases.

6 Our senior citizens and veterans
7 living on a fixed income the decision every day will
8 be to either pay Ameren or pay for needed medical
9 prescriptions, food or other needs. We all bite the
10 bullet. Show me what Ameren is doing without. How
11 many bonuses were paid last year? I have heard a
12 few. How many scholarships were granted? How many
13 political donations were made last year? And how
14 much was used to pay lobbyists? That's my money you
15 used.

16 We are at the mercy of Ameren and the
17 Illinois Commerce Commission. Surcharge increases
18 were up to 25 percent for not using natural gas,
19 penalties are unacceptable when not used. We are
20 expected to pay for something? Would you buy extra
21 milk because regulators require it, even if you don't
22 use it? No, you wouldn't. Yet we are expected to do

1 so for natural gas. I have serious issues with that.

2 It's been requested that those who do
3 not pay their bills be covered under this request.
4 We are to be penalized for those who do not pay their
5 bills? It is understandable why they don't. They
6 can't afford it.

7 When the rates are increased, our
8 military bases must now pay that additional cost. So
9 does our military cut back on supplies to fight the
10 war? Or do we deprive our combat soldiers the
11 equipment to fight it? Take away bulletproof vests,
12 ammunition, medical supplies for the wounded?
13 Penalize our fighting soldiers, how dare you? Our
14 veteran clinics in southern Illinois are faced with
15 either keeping the lights on or turning away needy
16 veterans. Who is paying for these? We can't afford
17 it.

18 We all, especially those in need, help
19 the most and those who are defending and those who
20 have defended this country. Recently we received a
21 donation of \$5 for support for troops over seas from
22 a military couple. They stated they wished it was

1 more, yet they were having trouble making ends meet
2 with the rising prices and paying the utility bill.
3 I tried to give it back. They wouldn't hear it.
4 They wanted to do their part, no matter how much it
5 hurt them.

6 It is time for us to make Ameren a
7 true public utility, maybe a government-run company,
8 no bonuses, no perks, no political donations. I
9 swore an oath to defend this great country from
10 enemies, foreign and domestic. Currently, Ameren is
11 fast approaching becoming a domestic enemy against
12 the American people. I cannot, will not, recommend
13 nor condone violence against Ameren. But our working
14 employees climbing the poles, we pay for those lines
15 with the bills themselves. We take the fight to
16 management within the guidelines, laws of the land,
17 legal boundaries and the laws that presently govern
18 our state. Much like our military when a commanding
19 officer fails to lead, protect the troops below them,
20 they will be released for cause. We, the citizens of
21 Illinois, must do the same. Our elected officials
22 are placed there to lead, to protect our system.

1 Failure to do so is to be released for cause, and we
2 will do that at the polls. Legally, lead or be
3 relieved of your public duties.

4 God bless America.

5 MS. DAVY: I know it is not my turn. I want
6 one minute, because everybody saw me walk out of here
7 like I was going to get help. Let me tell you what
8 they offered me. Monthly billing, now it wouldn't
9 change anything; it would be the same amount at the
10 end of the year. Oh, that doesn't help. And I have
11 a number here for emergency food and medical
12 assistance or rent assistance. Now, that's what he
13 walked out of here to give me.

14 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Patricia Parnell.
15 Patricia Parnell.

16 MS. PARNELL: Good evening. I learned
17 something about Belleville.

18 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Could you spell your
19 name, ma'am?

20 MS. PARNELL: Patricia, P-A-T-R-I-C-I-A,
21 Parnell, P-A-R-N-E-L-L.

22 I learned something about Belleville

1 this week. There is a company here that's called
2 Dynergy that's a subsidiary of AmerenIP, and you all
3 own it. Now, you don't have no profit coming in; you
4 are going to raise our rates in June. I understand
5 that you are opening up a brand new office building
6 the size of three football fields. That's pretty
7 big. Not only that, you are opening up 50 new
8 offices in downstate southern Illinois.

9 Now, I suggest let the customers have
10 their money back. There is no reason for you to have
11 another Dynergy when you have one already, and it is
12 three football fields long. There has got to be
13 money coming in. That's all of you. We are the ones
14 that are paying for it.

15 That's all I have to say. I don't
16 approve of it. I am an all electric person, and I am
17 going to be biting the dust come June.

18 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Patricia.

19 Kelly Bauza, B-A-U-Z-A.

20 MS. BAUZA: No.

21 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Pass? Okay, thank
22 you. Now it works.

1 Jeffrey Otto.

2 MR. OTTO: My name is Jeffrey Otto, last name
3 is spelled O-T-T-O, J-E-F-F-R-E-Y.

4 Thank you, Mr. Bensko, for the
5 opportunity to speak and be heard. I am going to be
6 a little bit more in depth than some people have, and
7 I am going to quote a few things. And please bear
8 with me. I am not going to offer a whole lot of
9 opinions. I am just going to quote facts.

10 I quote the Belleville News Democrat
11 in their article a couple days ago, thank them for
12 that, it says, "Ameren executives say the utility
13 needs the money to remain profitable and purchase new
14 infrastructure such as wooden poles, transformers and
15 cable lines." I don't know about you guys, but I am
16 going to go out on a limb and say that in 2006 Ameren
17 went out and purchased these exact same items. 2005
18 they went out and purchased the exact same items.
19 These are not new items that you have no idea about
20 and that you haven't budgeted for in the past and in
21 the future.

22 It also talks in the article, again I

1 am going to quote, there is a Mr. Abbott from
2 AmerenUE, he said, "The only scenario in which a
3 customer would see an additional charge on his bill
4 is in the instance of an unseasonably warm winter."
5 So what you are trying to say then with those costs
6 is because Mother Nature blesses us with an
7 unseasonably warm winter and I can save a hundred
8 dollars a month on my bill, I am still going to pay
9 more money. Explain that to me.

10 Whenever -- excuse me, whenever Mother
11 Nature sends us an unseasonably cold winter, do you
12 drop my prices? Are you going to reduce my prices in
13 those times?

14 Ameren talks about needing, needing --
15 Mr. Nelson used the word "need" an increase. Not
16 request, not want, but need. Yet first quarter 2007,
17 and I quote from the Journal Gazette Times Courier,
18 "Ameren's profits, Missouri-based Illinois reported
19 its net income rose to 123 million or \$.59 per share
20 from 70 million or \$.34 a share one year ago.

21 Now, here is going to be some of the
22 objections that we are going to hear, because people

1 are going to throw out that 500 and some odd million
2 dollars, 600 and some odd million dollars that you
3 can find on Ameren's website for the amount of
4 reported income, net income for the company. Now,
5 they are going to come back and they are going to
6 say -- you are going to hear it a little bit later, I
7 guarantee it -- they are going to say that we are
8 representing Illinois. We are representing AmerenIP.
9 We are representing the Illinois portion. We are not
10 representing all of the Ameren Company itself, which
11 is true.

12 But its Illinois subsidiaries,
13 AmerenCIPS, AmerenCILCO and AmerenIP, contributed \$29
14 million to Ameren's net income in the first quarter
15 of 2007 compared to \$9 million in the year ago
16 period, the Company said, and I quote. \$20 million.
17 Ameren is struggling and suffering and weeping
18 because they have -- they are falling so far behind
19 that they can't meet their bills. They are going to
20 make less money this year. This is with the rate
21 increase. Ameren still says that they need more
22 money.

1 Now, I am going to be fair, and I
2 would hope we would get the same treatment. An
3 Ameren spokesman, Shelley Epstein, said that \$10
4 million of the net income on the Ameren Illinois side
5 of the business was money originally set aside as
6 special credits for customers. So that's money they
7 didn't have to pay out. They already budgeted that
8 money.

9 Another four million in net income was
10 due to the cold winter weather. So Ameren, like I
11 spoke about earlier, wants to raise rates whenever we
12 have an unseasonably warm winter, and they are
13 telling us right now that in the first quarter of
14 2007 four million extra dollars came from cold
15 weather and unseasonably harsh temperatures. Ameren
16 is saying that they don't have enough money to pursue
17 this. They don't have enough money to pay for the
18 poles that are already in their budget. They want to
19 talk to us about their costs and how much they have
20 gone up and how they need, need this increase.

21 I have Verizon for my phone provider.
22 I have Charter Cable for my cable provider. Both of

1 these services experienced similar difficulties in
2 downed lines and repairs and work to repair the
3 services they provide. My Verizon bill hasn't raised
4 a penny. My Charter bill has actually gone down.
5 Now, don't get me started on Charter, because that is
6 a totally separate issue. They may be the only
7 people I like talking to less than AmerenIP.

8 Now I go back --

9 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Sir, so the people
10 outside can hear you, talk a little bit into the
11 microphone. Thanks.

12 MR. OTTO: Okay. All right. To quote again,
13 this year so far in the first half of 2007 Ameren
14 Corporation is reporting income of 266 million in the
15 first half of the year. That's \$1.29 a share and a
16 37 percent increase over last year. Even with the
17 money that they are giving back from these rate
18 increases, Ameren's profit is up 37 percent in the
19 first half of the year.

20 And CEO Gary Rainwater attributes the
21 higher earnings to higher power prices for Ameren's
22 power generation, businesses, and warmer summer

1 weather.

2 Now, Ameren just stood over here and
3 told us -- Mr. Nelson just stood over here and told
4 us that Ameren does not pass on any of the fees to us
5 for the cost of purchasing electricity. Do you want
6 to know why that is? Because they buy it from
7 themselves. Ameren has companies that produce power.
8 Ameren buys companies from those -- buys power from
9 those companies that produce power. These companies
10 are the result of deregulation.

11 There used to be competition for
12 purchasing power. Since the deregulation ten years
13 ago, the number of companies that produce power has
14 actually reduced. Deregulation has not worked.
15 Ameren has gobbled up some of the smaller entities.
16 Ameren has started producing power for themselves.
17 They make it seem like they are doing us a favor by
18 not charging us the price of the power they acquire,
19 but the price already reflects the profit going to
20 the company that they purchase that from, which is
21 their own company.

22 I would love to be able to purchase

1 things from my own company and stand up here and try
2 and tell myself that I wasn't making a profit.

3 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you. Could you
4 wrap it up, Jeff? We have a lot more people.

5 MR. OTTO: I understand.

6 Now, Ameren also wants us to foot the
7 bill for all the expenses. It is the cost of doing
8 business. They want us to pay for people who aren't
9 paying their own bills. It is a cost of doing
10 business. There is not another entity out there, a
11 public -- a non-government entity, that is allowed to
12 pursue rate increases.

13 This is a monopoly. That's the thing
14 that people don't understand. Ameren has a right to
15 make a profit, but we have a right to determine what
16 that profit is. If Ameren would like to step out and
17 say that their profits aren't good enough, if they
18 want to offer the exact same profits, we put that out
19 for bid with the exact same profit structure, I
20 wonder how many companies would be more than willing
21 to come in and assume Ameren's position.

22 Competition, monopolies. The monopoly

1 was set up to protect the people. In this case it is
2 not.

3 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Jeff. You
4 left your paper right there.

5 Patricia Jones.

6 MS. JONES: My name is Patricia Jones,
7 P-A-T-R-I-C-I-A, J-O-N-E-S.

8 All I wanted to say was all winter I
9 keep my thermostat set at 60 degrees in order that I
10 can pay my electric bill. I have all electric heat.
11 It's been very reasonable through 2006. Last year
12 when they upped the rates, it went from \$80 in
13 December to 140 in January, and that ended the middle
14 of January. For two weeks it went from 80 to 140.
15 In February it went from 140 to 285 which was four
16 times what I was paying in 2006.

17 So I have lived in my house for almost
18 34 years, but I am thinking I probably should sell my
19 house and maybe go to gas heat, buy a trailer, sell
20 my house, get an apartment, in order to pay my
21 electric, my electric bills.

22 So, anyway, that's about all I have to

1 say. And last summer I kept my thermostat set at 80
2 which was not too comfortable, but that's what I had
3 to do in order to pay my electric bill. That's all I
4 have to say.

5 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Patricia.

6 Kim Eichelberger. Please don't kill
7 me for butchering names.

8 MS. EICHELBERGER: Actually, I was going to say
9 that you did a really good job on your first shot. I
10 am from Belleville. My name is Kim Eichelberger.
11 For the court reporter, do I need to spell that for
12 you?

13 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Yes.

14 MS. EICHELBERGER: E-I-C-H-E-L-B-E-R-G-E-R.

15 First of all, I would like to thank
16 everyone for having us here tonight to express our
17 opinions. I would also like to publicly thank Tom
18 Holbrook, a representative from our area, because I
19 know at least Tom is outspoken against the rate
20 increases and fought for rate relief. So I would
21 like to acknowledge Tom here tonight.

22 I am going to try to be as brief as

1 possible. Many of the things I planned on saying
2 have already been said. However, in light of last
3 year's fiasco, I can't believe I am here expressing
4 outrage over another increase. We all saw in the
5 paper, "Most customers are going to expect to see a
6 dollar a day increase." We also saw "Up to a maximum
7 of 55 percent increase." Now, I can't tell you how
8 many times I read that, and I followed those
9 articles.

10 Well, imagine my surprise when I get
11 my power bill and it goes from 138 to 327 in one
12 month, 55 percent. Now, I am not a mathematician
13 here, but that's closer to 200 percent. And unless
14 it was some mass hallucination visually on all of our
15 parts, did you or did you not talk about the exact
16 increases that I just stated in the paper over and
17 over, which is probably why the legislators let you
18 get away with it in the first place? Not that I am
19 going to defend everything that they did either, but
20 that's a whole another ball game.

21 You know what, we don't trust you. We
22 don't trust you. We don't believe in you. You

1 haven't served the people of southern Illinois. You
2 haven't served us. Quite frankly, the customer
3 service gentleman who got up here and said so
4 eloquently how you guys were just trying so hard to
5 earn our respect, with all due respect you need to
6 earn it before you give us any more rate increases.

7 The other thing is that there have
8 been a lot of excellent questions asked here tonight
9 by lots of people. Brad Van Hoose, wherever you are,
10 you are wonderful. And we have a court reporter. I
11 say that she transcribes it, it goes to Illinois
12 Power, they or Ameren, excuse me, AmerenIP, they need
13 to answer all those questions in written form and
14 send them to every customer they have in the state of
15 Illinois.

16 Thank you and have a good night.

17 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you.

18 Fred Lewis.

19 MR. LEWIS: Good evening. I am a retired
20 public school teacher and my --

21 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Fred, could you --

22 MR. LEWIS: I am sorry, that's L-E-W-I-S, Fred.

1 My benefit increase was three percent
2 this year, not eight percent. And, first of all, I
3 would like to address some remarks concerning the
4 Illinois Power Company, not Ameren Illinois but the
5 old Illinois Power Company.

6 As a teacher, Illinois Power Company
7 provided a suburb service to area educators. They
8 offered cash, many grants to teachers. They had an
9 extensive video library available to teachers. They
10 offered numerous contests and savings for students on
11 their website. For instance, each month they had a
12 challenging math problem. All students who solved it
13 correctly were given a gift certificate to Best Buy.
14 There were essay contests for language arts students.
15 They also offered internships to college students.
16 My daughter participated in this very program. This
17 was all very good P.R. It built trust, respect and
18 friendship between Illinois Power, the school system
19 and the community.

20 Ameren has succeeded in building just
21 the opposite, distrust, disrespect and animosity.
22 Ameren does have some educational stuff on the

1 website, not even listed on their home page. Most of
2 the things are public domain, teacher lesson plans
3 that were free and science certificates which Ameren
4 just grabbed and downloaded on their website. Ameren
5 has no interest in conservation. They offer no
6 incentives for solar, geothermal, volatile tank or
7 any other type of energy saving systems. In fact, it
8 is rumored that in case of extremely warm or cool
9 summer Ameren wants to increase -- wants a rate
10 structure which will penalize a customer for using
11 less energy.

12 Last year before the increase my bill
13 was \$137. It rose to a high of 499 in March and has
14 recently settled back to 254 after the legislature
15 made changes over the summer. I have here a sheet
16 off of Ameren's website, and I would like to read
17 just a short sentence from it. "Ameren Corporation
18 is the parent company of AmerenCILCO, AmerenCIPS,
19 AmerenIP, AmerenUE, Ameren Energy, Ameren Energy
20 Resources, Ameren Energy Generating Company, Ameren
21 Energy Development-Ameren Energy, Ameren Energy
22 Marketing and Ameren Energy Fuels and Services,

1 Ameren Energy Resources and Generating Systems, and
2 Ameren Services." We know where the money is going.
3 It is a bunch of legal mumbo-jumbo where they mix
4 among themselves and stick us for the difference.

5 I would like to end my comment with a
6 little story. Once upon a time I purchased a new
7 car. The dealer had many options. I accepted a cash
8 back offer and moved \$3,000 into my parent company,
9 my IRA. I declined the extended warranty and instead
10 sent an additional \$1800 cash payment to my parent
11 company, my IRA. I did no maintenance on the car.
12 Instead, when it came time to change the oil, I added
13 a quart and put \$35 into my parent company. My car
14 required premium gasoline. Instead, I bought 87
15 octane and put \$.20 for each gallon into my IRA. New
16 tires? The old ones had air in them; I sent \$500 to
17 my IRA. I kept this up for some time. Then one day
18 my car failed inspection. I went back to the dealer
19 and said you have got to fix it. He said, "Listen,
20 Mr. Lewis, you had every opportunity over the last
21 few years to maintain your car, but you chose to skip
22 repairs and upkeep and placed all that money in your

1 parent company, your IRA. Now you ask me to pay for
2 your greed. Are you sure, Mr. Lewis?" I said,
3 "Screw you, fix your car out of your own parent
4 company, your IRA."

5 And to Ameren I say, "You had every
6 opportunity the last few years to maintain your
7 infrastructure but instead put the money into your
8 parent companies." And I say to you, "Screw you, fix
9 your infrastructure out of your IRA."

10 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Steve G-A-R-G-A-C, I
11 believe. Granite City.

12 MR. GARGAC: Yes, I am Steve Gargac, S-T-E-V-E
13 G-A-R-G-A-C. I live in Granite City. I would like
14 to thank the Commission for allowing me to speak to
15 you.

16 And I don't know how you can consider
17 another rate increase for Ameren when they just
18 received an eight percent last year, and nobody that
19 I know of has ever received an eight percent increase
20 in the last few years of any kind whatsoever.

21 While I had my own business which I
22 sold several years ago, I had to pay for everything

1 that I ever used within it. The only thing I could
2 ever charge a customer for besides what I could
3 collect from him was the shipping charges.

4 Now Ameren is planning to charge for
5 all of these particular items that they are trying to
6 purchase, as well as trying to charge us for meters
7 which I have already paid for and put into various
8 homes. The profits, which I keep hearing are
9 enormous, and the CEOs, who are taking away the
10 salaries and bonuses, are coming close into the
11 millions. The REA of Illinois has granted free
12 electricity in December for the years 2005 and 2006.
13 Ameren has never proposed free anything for anyone.

14 And how about freezing your rates for
15 some of the retired seniors whose income and their
16 only increase comes from their Social Security, which
17 usually averages about three to three and a half
18 percent a year?

19 And what happened to the deregulation
20 that we were supposed to have so that we could
21 purchase power from other sources? This has never
22 come about, and I am very disappointed in that.

1 Thank you for your time.

2 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Steve.

3 John Holverson.

4 MR. HOLVERSON: Pass.

5 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Earnestine Walker.

6 MS. WALKER: Good evening. My name is

7 Earnestine Walker of Fairview Heights, Illinois.

8 Earnestine is spelled E-A-R-N-E-S-T-I-N-E. Walker is

9 spelled W-A-L-K-E-R. And you know how to spell

10 Fairview Heights. I live there.

11 I am a representative of AARP, and I

12 am also a volunteer. And I work with a lot of

13 elderly people. And my grief is tonight you just

14 tell me where to tell them to go and file for this

15 money that you all so readily want to give away.

16 Because we haven't found it. Each time they apply

17 for something or a grant to help them, they are told,

18 "We are out of funds."

19 Now, I don't know where this money is.

20 I would personally go down to see about it. That

21 money is not there. If it is, I still say it, we

22 haven't found it. They need help. Lots of them.

1 And when you live under \$500 a month, pay rent, pay
2 gas bill, water bill and telephone bill, and all of
3 these things are very necessary to the elderly. Some
4 of them are incapacitated, they are in wheelchairs,
5 on walkers and other things.

6 When the power went out, we found a
7 lot of people. They needed someone to just call them
8 and say hello to see how they were doing. I am one
9 of these volunteers that go by and knock on the door
10 to see if you are okay. I don't mind it, and I am
11 going to continue as long as I can. These things are
12 very necessary in our state.

13 I have been a member of the state of
14 Illinois all of my life. I was born here, and I know
15 what goes on here. None of this stuff I am hearing
16 tonight is true. If it is, I still would like to see
17 it. And I am a registered voter here, and I will be
18 casting my vote. And if I have a chance, I will
19 definitely vote that AmerenUE go out the window.

20 Thank you very much.

21 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Ernestine.

22 Wanda Clayton.

1 MS. CLAYTON: My name is Wanda Clayton,
2 W-A-N-D-A, C-L-A-Y-T-O-N.

3 I am here tonight to tell you about my
4 electric bill. My electric bill is \$418 this month.
5 Last month it was \$272. In December of last year it
6 was \$79. And of that 418, the delivery charge is
7 \$145. And I am just wondering why we have to pay
8 this much in delivery charges, because a person can't
9 afford it.

10 And that's all I need to say.

11 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Wanda.

12 Rich Dorrough.

13 MR. DORROUGH: First of all, thank you -- first
14 of all, I would like to thank you for the opportunity
15 to appear tonight.

16 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Could you spell your
17 name for the court reporter?

18 MR. DORROUGH: My name is Richard,
19 R-I-C-H-A-R-D, Dorrough, D-O-R-R-O-U-G-H. And I
20 congratulate you for pronouncing that correctly.

21 I am here, I have got my wool socks
22 on, and I have got my sweat pants, I have got my two

1 shirts and my sweat shirt, and I left my blanket out
2 in the car, and that's what I wear indoors.

3 So I really have a different take on
4 our representatives here. I don't think they have
5 done a good job at all. I think that that agreement
6 last year was atrocious. I mean, I got my hundred
7 dollars and probably a lot of the folks here got
8 their hundred dollars. But in January I paid the
9 highest energy bill that I have ever had in history,
10 and it just goes on month after month. So that
11 didn't do a whole lot for me. And I am not all that
12 happy about it.

13 So I can probably give everybody an
14 idea why you don't see all the other Commissioners
15 here, because I think you don't see them here because
16 this thing is pretty much up to them. I don't trust
17 politicians. Just like the other lady, don't trust
18 the Illinois Commerce Commission, you know. I think
19 politics will -- their first loyalty is whoever walks
20 in their office with the biggest bag of money. And I
21 am really non-partisan about this, you know. I think
22 both parties do it. I think all politicians do it,

1 and it is absolutely disgusting. I mean, it is
2 obscene the way we don't -- we are not represented by
3 the people we elect any more. The lobbyists run this
4 country, and they run our representatives.

5 So just look at the outrageous amount
6 of money that it has taken today to be elected
7 president. I mean, we are talking hundreds of
8 millions of dollars for what? I don't want to vote
9 for any of those people. So, and I am not partisan
10 about that.

11 So I think him and his firm here is
12 just a way of someone placating the public. So are
13 all you people placated tonight?

14 You know, gas is, what, over \$3 a
15 gallon. You know, milk, bread, clothes, every staple
16 of life has gone up. So we can hardly afford it any
17 more. I keep my temperature to 60s in my house, just
18 like the other lady did, and I wear all these heavy
19 clothes. Drag these blankets around with me so I can
20 sit in my chair and cover myself up so I won't freeze
21 to death. But that's the only way I could do it. I
22 wouldn't be able to pay for it otherwise.

1 So, well, I think I have heard a
2 comment by Mr. Holbrook that anybody can have their
3 voice heard, and we think that's critical for the
4 Commissioners to hear. Well, I checked out a couple
5 other representatives. Mr. Bob Flider, Mt. Zion, and
6 Mr. Mike Smith up in Canton. They said the same
7 thing, almost verbatim. I mean, how many of you
8 people have gotten on the TV during election season
9 and heard somebody come in and just boom, boom, boom,
10 boom, boom, just a list of talking points? That's
11 really all that is. It is a talking point, you know,
12 and that's supposed to make us feel good. It
13 certainly doesn't make me feel good, although I am
14 kind of happy and having fun here right now.

15 So, anyway, my comments to Ameren, I
16 worked for 3M Corporation or Company for 30 years and
17 I was in sales. And I called on all the automotive
18 companies. I called on Ford and GM and Chrysler and
19 all the rest of them, and I called on the next tier,
20 you know, the people that supplied GM, people like
21 Nascote Industries down in Nashville, Illinois.

22 And we'd always come in there with the

1 idea that we are partners with those people. And
2 they absolutely demanded every year that we bring
3 them a five percent savings on anything we sold to
4 them. So if I sold them a million dollars, I had to
5 bring a \$50,000 savings to them. I had to give them
6 back \$50,000 with some innovation, some idea that
7 would help them produce a product better, produce it
8 faster, produce it with less labor.

9 So that's the way we did business. We
10 were partners with all of our customers, so that we
11 actually could leave and understand that -- you know,
12 what their business was. And I don't hear any of
13 this. All I hear is, "Oh, we are not making enough
14 money. We need a price increase."

15 Well, sure, I could go to GM and say,
16 "Well, this product costs you a dollar this year but
17 we are going to charge you \$1.25 next year." And
18 they could go to their dealers or whatever, they
19 could go to GM and say, "Oh, we are going to charge
20 you 25 percent more for that fascia next year that we
21 are producing for you." Then GM comes to you as a
22 consumer and says, "Instead of paying \$40,000 for

1 that car next year, we are going to charge you
2 50,000." Why? Does that sound like something that
3 is going to fly? No, no.

4 So you become partners. You become
5 partners with your suppliers. And you tell your
6 suppliers, your pole suppliers, you can't do business
7 with us unless you find five percent savings for us
8 next year. And if you did that every year -- and we
9 had to do it every year. It wasn't one year; it was
10 every year. So it made us better because we became
11 better innovators. We came up with good ideas to
12 save them money, you know, so that their profit
13 margin would be stable, you know, and also ours would
14 be, you know.

15 I don't hear any of that stuff. I
16 hear, "Hey, we need more money, so we are going to
17 charge you more." Okay. Same way with the State of
18 Illinois, your good friend the Governor, you know.
19 We are so far in debt, I mean, we can't see the end
20 of it. And what's his idea? Oh, let's build some
21 more race tracks or let's give them some more
22 casinos. It was a good idea for him to give free

1 rides, though, because now he can give everybody in
2 this room a free ride down to the casino. Right?
3 That sounds like a winner.

4 I mean, so I am telling you people,
5 you better hold on to your wallets. Because the only
6 way out of debt is you either -- you either save and
7 you conserve or you go out and get more money. And
8 where does the government get more money?
9 Governments don't make money. They may print more,
10 but they don't make more. They get it out of your
11 pocket. So that's what we can look forward to.

12 So I am sorry if I have gone on too
13 long. So I come to say my piece and I have said it.
14 So I don't expect my opinion to change anything. I
15 think it is a done deal, and that's just my own
16 opinion. Now I am going to go home and put on
17 another sweat shirt and get out another blanket.

18 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Rich.

19 Floyd Williams.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, you know, when I --

21 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Floyd, you need to
22 state your name and spell it for the court reporter.

1 MR. WILLIAMS: It's Floyd, F-L-O-Y-D, Williams,
2 W-I-L-L-I-A-M-S.

3 I have been yelling, yelling, yelling.
4 My doctor says I am a dead man walking. So I am
5 going to make heat, do you believe that? My blood
6 pressure is up to 225, so I am making good heat.

7 But the deal is you look at politics
8 today and Exelon is buying our presidency. They gave
9 him a hundred million dollars, Obama. And it is
10 automatically -- people don't even wonder where the
11 money comes from. All you have to do is look on the
12 computer. He gets over a hundred million dollars
13 from Exelon which owns Chicago electricity, which
14 owns drug companies and everything else. All we are
15 doing is promoting more money in people's pockets.

16 We have got dying -- and this is all I
17 am going to say. But we have got people that die
18 every year and nobody cares about them. Got a guy in
19 East St. Louis, a big old heavy set guy, his kids the
20 last time we were in here for a rate increase, his
21 kids were living at that time at 65 degrees
22 temperature. Now, I bet he dips his down to 50 now.

1 And they changed it around, and you
2 let them do it. What happens is they changed it
3 around where electric rates during the summer are
4 cheaper and needs to be higher. But there is more
5 rates higher during the winter because there is more
6 winter. So they changed it around and moved the
7 rates around, and nobody knows why their rates are
8 higher now during the winter time. And you have got
9 to have the energy during the winter time. You just
10 can't -- during the summer you can just sweat your
11 neck off. You have got to have that heat. So they
12 changed it. These people are not dumb, and I just
13 can't see you letting them get away with it.

14 People are dying. There should be
15 murder charges put against these people. I mean,
16 these people -- three people died last summer.
17 People died this year, all over money. Man, we're
18 bad in Illinois.

19 Missouri don't pay as much for
20 electric rate. A Gilliam man told me that. He said,
21 "You guys are dumb in Illinois." He said, "In
22 Missouri we get our electricity cheaper than you do."

1 So we are not dumb; we have just got everybody paid
2 off in Illinois. And nobody cares, not one person.

3 I told somebody awhile ago, that guy
4 that yelled at you that talked a lot, I asked him a
5 while ago, if one person walked in here and said you
6 need -- deserved a pay raise, everybody would die.
7 They would wonder where he came from for the last 20
8 years. But we are in bad shape when we have got kids
9 freezing in their house. We didn't do that when we
10 were younger. We didn't let nobody freeze. We are a
11 country that don't care about nobody else.

12 We worry about our soldiers burning
13 nothing, and the thing is -- and if UE was over
14 there, we would all burn up and that would be it.
15 They come home and they freeze to death in their
16 houses; their kids are freezing to death. Does UE
17 care about military? No. UE don't care about nobody
18 but the five presidents they have got at the top, and
19 they have all got to play golf.

20 So please wake up and start -- I mean,
21 you can't let -- nobody in here would say they should
22 have a raise. Does that mean something to you, when

1 people's kids are dying?

2 I have got plenty of money. I mean,
3 my doctor says I am a real idiot. You have got
4 plenty of money. I have got a good living. I fight
5 for poor people. My parents, my relatives always
6 fight for poor people. They all go to my tavern, I
7 have got a cave, half of Missouri, but they always
8 fought for poor people. We are not all trying to get
9 money from somebody. We want people to survive.

10 Because if the poor people keep on
11 dying, one of these days they are going to walk up to
12 you while you are at your house washing your car and
13 somebody is going to say I need a car to sell so I
14 can have energy and they are going to blow your
15 brains out while you are washing your car.

16 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you.

17 Randy Lampe.

18 MR. LAMPE: How do you do? Randy Lampe,
19 Lena-Apple-Michael-Paul-Echo. I am a line clearer
20 straight truck, have been one for 15 years. So I
21 have dealt with Ameren and all the rest of them quite
22 a bit. And I come to find out when they do open

1 their mouth, they are lying. They own the their own
2 power plants because I trim all the trees. I see
3 them all the time. I am the guy in the ice storm who
4 only gets paid this much while their lineman sitting
5 next to me gets paid that much. Do you know that
6 power is only \$.25 a minute a day? That's about what
7 they make. Anyway, I just wanted to say that, that
8 they do own the plants. The government is
9 subsidizing them or not, I don't know. That's just,
10 you know, basic truth. So that's a liar, liar, pants
11 on fire first.

12 And I want to thank you again,
13 Mr. Nelson. It's because of you I am running for
14 senator, okay, Clayborne's spot in the 57th District.

15 But I just want to let everybody know
16 that you just can't tell the truth. The ICC has got
17 the wool pulled over their eyes because you won't
18 tell them the truth. Just tell them the truth. Be
19 nice and it might do you good. And the ICC, you
20 finally may get a chance to maybe redeem yourself
21 from the fiasco that they lied to you about. You
22 know that. They all lied to you and in the end it

1 was too late and everybody had pie on their face.

2 Well, you know, that's one thing.

3 Then they talk to you about distribution and
4 transmission lines. I trim those all the time. You
5 know, they never have any distribution or
6 transmission problems because those trees are so far
7 out of the wires that it would take a tornado to lift
8 one up and move it into them. So, yeah, you are
9 getting it from your plant, through the transmission
10 distribution, through your substations to your house,
11 and they want money for that. I say no.

12 Unless Fairview Heights validates my
13 parking, I have got to go. Thank you for your time.

14 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Folks, if we are going
15 to have a question and answer period tonight, we are
16 going to have to speed this thing up. So I am just
17 asking you when I call your name, get to the point,
18 please, so we can have a question and answer period
19 and give everyone a chance to speak tonight.

20 Susan Horneman. Remember to state
21 your name and spell it for the court reporter.
22 Thanks.

1 MS. HORNEMAN: Hi, my name is Susan Horneman,
2 S-U-S-A-N, H-O-R-N-E-M-A-N. I live in Lebanon,
3 Illinois.

4 I, too, wear a lot of clothing. I am
5 burning up in here. I don't know why you keep it so
6 warm. How can you afford it? Yeah, we are paying
7 for it. I do have a problem with the fact that, yes,
8 I am shivering in my house, and I have dropped the
9 heat down. I am now retired, and I have dropped the
10 heat down, and it doesn't make any difference. And
11 if I reduce the amount of energy that I consume, you
12 are going to come back and say you are not using
13 enough so we are going to -- it is just never ending.
14 I can't win. I am in a hundred year old house. I
15 have caulked, I have stuffed, I have closed rooms, I
16 have insulated, I have done everything I can possibly
17 do other than burning the inside of the house to keep
18 warm. Sixty-three degrees is not comfortable.

19 I called ICC and I was told that this
20 Ameren is not a monopoly, so all you people are
21 wrong. They said they don't meet the legal
22 definition of a monopoly. That may be. But when the

1 fuel goes up, I have options. I can go to different
2 stations. I can car pool. Thanks to the price of
3 fuel, you see the new svelte person. I have lost ten
4 pounds because I walk a mile to the store, rather
5 than burning fuel to go back and forth. I am losing
6 weight. That's the good thing, that's the up side.

7 Cable goes up, I don't need
8 television. I can live without television.
9 Telephone service, thankfully that was broken up so
10 you can shop around and get a cheaper service.

11 I cannot go to anyone but Ameren. I
12 am stuck with you. I want to know why that isn't a
13 monopoly, ICC.

14 Secondarily, I went to a coal
15 conference in southern Illinois, and Peabody Coal was
16 making a big brooha -- I am not nuts about Peabody
17 either -- about their new plant 50 miles south of
18 here and how they were going to have efficient,
19 inexpensive energy to offer. Are they offering it in
20 Illinois? Oh, heck, no. It is going to Virginia,
21 and that's because Ameren, according to their public
22 relations director, Ameren was given the opportunity

1 to buy into that plant and thus insure a ready
2 supply, cheap supply, of energy and Ameren opted out.
3 Now it is going to Jacksonville, Illinois, and
4 southern Illinois. Why? And, of course, I didn't
5 know you guys produced your own energy and bought
6 from yourselves until tonight.

7 When you talk about the fact that you
8 need to be profitable and you need to make X amount
9 of money so that it is comparable to other utilities,
10 what utilities? Who? I mean, I work for the
11 government. I know how these shell games work. If
12 you are comparing yourself to a company in California
13 where they make a considerable amount more money than
14 we do in southern Illinois, sure, you are going to be
15 at the low end. If you are comparing yourself to New
16 York, sure, or even Chicago. But who are you
17 comparing yourself with? Are you comparing yourself
18 with somebody that's comparable to what you do? I
19 very seriously doubt that.

20 Last, I think we are forgetting about
21 the trickle down of this. We are talking about our
22 residents. We are all setting around bundled and

1 cold. We are forgetting about the fact that there
2 are small business that are taking a nose dive, and
3 those that are staying in business with the up cost
4 of utilities, who pays for that? We do. We pay for
5 it more in our house. Now we pay for it more in the
6 stores. And it is getting to where with every
7 business that we lose, every small business that goes
8 under who doesn't have the write-offs or the benefits
9 of being able to just up their price arbitrarily
10 because if they up their prices, their customers go
11 elsewhere, unlike with Ameren.

12 And I think the final coup-de-gras for
13 me last year, I bit into, yeah, they must need to
14 make more money to do this and this and this. But
15 when they got on television and a woman said that the
16 executives -- they have really exceptional bonuses,
17 and she said, "Well, they didn't do this for
18 themselves. Human resources did that." Oh, isn't
19 that something. Their people who are way down the
20 totem pole below them went ahead and gave them this
21 bonus, and they have no influence on them? Look, we
22 didn't fall off the turnip truck and we didn't buy it

1 then and we are certainly not buying it now.

2 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Susan.

3 Rose Wilson. Rose Wilson.

4 MS. WILSON: Good evening. My name is Rose
5 Wilson, R-O-S-E, W-I-L-S-O-N.

6 I don't have very much to say. But I
7 invite all the top executives of AmerenIP and all of
8 their subsidiaries to leave their million dollar
9 mansions and move for one year and move into the
10 homes of the working people here that pay their
11 salaries and their oh-so-small bonuses.

12 After a year of struggling with bills
13 like we do and trying to make choices and budgeting,
14 maybe they would have a different outlook what real
15 life is really like, and then the profit margin that
16 they make seems to be exorbitant.

17 And I ask the Illinois Commerce
18 Commission to work for the people and not for the
19 companies.

20 Thank you.

21 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Rose.

22 Bob Engelke.

1 MR. ENGELKE: Yeah, my name is Bob Engelke.

2 That's spelled B-O-B, you can spell that backwards or
3 forwards. It comes to the same thing. And the last
4 name is E-N-G-E-L-K-E.

5 And the thing I have is how much money
6 is Ameren contributing for political campaign funds?
7 Is this what our rate increase that they are asking
8 for, is that what they are going to use this for?
9 Because it seems to me, and I have read this in the
10 Belleville paper a lot, that a lot of politicians are
11 getting a lot of money for political campaigns.

12 And also the Village of Edwardsville
13 over there, they built a new YMCA and guess who
14 donated \$90,000 to the YMCA to build an olympic size
15 swimming pool. Well, you know what, I could care
16 less about the YMCA, and I guess you can tell I don't
17 go to the YMCA. But there is a lot of people in this
18 audience and I see a lot of retired people here, that
19 don't go to the YMCA because they probably can't
20 afford it. And also the YMCA charges people to go
21 there. I am sure they can earn money enough to build
22 this swimming pool themselves. They don't need

1 contributions from AmerenIP.

2 And also back years ago I came from --

3 I drove up here, I drove 40 miles. I came from

4 Livingston, Illinois, and there is probably a lot of

5 people here and I imagine a lot of people at that

6 table don't even know where Livingston, Illinois, is

7 at. But being from a small community you get on a

8 lot of committees if you are concerned about your

9 community and everything. And I was on the police

10 committee, I was on the city board, I was a township

11 trustee, I was township supervisor. And this

12 gentleman here was talking about the energy

13 assistance program. Well, I did that for Olive

14 Township. Livingston is in Olive Township. And I

15 did that for Madison County, I took applications.

16 And I want to say I never heard of anybody that could

17 get any kind of energy assistance making \$50,000 a

18 year. It was somewhere -- and I don't remember

19 because I haven't done it for several years now -- it

20 was somewhere like 36, 37 thousand dollars and then

21 you had to have like eight people living in your

22 household to be eligible for energy assistance. And

1 that's sad. And our politicians are running around
2 here talking about 50, 60 thousand dollars a year
3 like it is poverty level. We have got a lot of
4 people who is living out here on 20, 25, 30 thousand
5 dollars a year. And I will tell you another thing,
6 my mother just passed away January 8. She was 94 in
7 five months. And anybody want to take a guess how
8 much she was making? She was a farmer's wife; we
9 lived on a farm. Anybody want to take a guess? She
10 was getting \$460 a month. My brother was power of
11 attorney for her, took care of her checks and
12 everything. That one month, for some reason I don't
13 know, we got a check for \$400 for her electric bill.
14 My brother calls and says, "What's this about?" And
15 they said, "Well, it's too bad; you have got to paid
16 it." There was no consoling, there was nothing that
17 we could talk about, any kind of payment plan. And
18 that's another thing. As far as the supervisor
19 thing, when I did this energy assistance, I tried to
20 work things out with the power company as far as when
21 people came to me I would call Illinois Power trying
22 to work out some kind of plan where these people

1 could catch up on their billing like in the winter
2 time, things were bad, bills were higher, you know
3 and everything, and they put them on a payment plan.
4 But, boy, the first time they missed that payment,
5 they would shut their power off. You know, so that's
6 not going to help those people, you know. And the
7 thing of it is, you guys can charge all the rates you
8 want to, but what are you going to do when everybody
9 can't pay their bill and you shut everybody off?
10 Then where are you going to make your money from?
11 You going to raise your rates again?

12 Thank you.

13 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Bob.

14 Kim Dillard. Kim Dillard?

15 Jeannie Edwards.

16 MS. EDWARDS: Jeannie Edwards, J-E-A-N-N-I-E,
17 Edwards, E-D-W-A-R-D-S.

18 I called Ameren about my budget
19 billing because when it came out, they said that it
20 was going to -- you had to pay up at the end of the
21 year what you owed over. And I called them up
22 because it was in December and I said can I get it

1 changed to a different month, like in early spring
2 when my bill levels itself out more. And they said,
3 no, it had to stay in December. I didn't start
4 budget billing in December. It was like in the
5 summer.

6 And that's not going -- you know, they
7 say they want to help people, but when people call
8 for help, they don't want to do anything. You know,
9 they come up with another excuse for it.

10 You know, people can't afford it,
11 especially at Christmas time, you know. You are
12 taking enough away from the people and then now you
13 have got to add Christmas in it. And the man
14 earlier, the way he was dressed, where I work at, I
15 was helping Brad with the petitions, and there was a
16 lot of elderly people that came in there and said
17 that their thermostats were at 60 and they have got
18 to wear sweaters and everything in their house. They
19 work all their life to have to sit in a cold house
20 now? That's not right.

21 I am sure you guys don't. You make
22 plenty of money. You have don't have to sit around

1 in sweaters. You ought to think about the other
2 people that don't make as much money as you.

3 Thank you.

4 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you.

5 Scott Tyler.

6 MR. TYLER: Hello. Scott Tyler of Belleville.

7 I would like to thank the ICC --

8 T-Y-L-E-R.

9 I would like to thank the ICC for
10 giving Belleville residents a forum to be heard. Now
11 I hope you are willing to listen and act on what we
12 have to say. Hopefully, you can tell by the turnout
13 here we are very concerned about this.

14 The ICC has already allowed Ameren to
15 use reverse auctions to price electricity in
16 Illinois. Reverse auctions were planned, designed
17 and created by the power companies as a legal way to
18 artificially inflate prices. An independent study by
19 the Yarbrough National Lab and the U of I has shown
20 the reverse auction created prices approximately 40
21 percent higher than market prices for comparable
22 wholesale electricity markets and approximately

1 doubling the actual cost of producing electricity.

2 Based on this unfair price gouging,
3 the Illinois Attorney General filed a complaint with
4 the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission alleging
5 price manipulation. This complaint was dropped as
6 part of the deal Illinois lawmakers cut with Ameren
7 that resulted in the rate relief package of 2007.
8 But that doesn't mean price manipulation didn't
9 happen because it did, without a doubt.

10 Anyhow, the Illinois lawmakers cut a
11 deal, and what a deal it was. Rebates stretched out
12 over four years at an average of 130 bucks for a
13 typical household. Well, my power bill, along with
14 the majority of the people in this room, power bill
15 went up over \$130 in one month. So where exactly is
16 our rate relief? We can't see it. Our relief check
17 went straight back to Ameren, along with more money,
18 just to pay for one month's bill.

19 By Ameren's own admission the 2007
20 rate increase is approximately 400 million. That's
21 1.6 billion over four years. The great deal
22 lawmakers negotiated was to return 488 million of

1 that 1.6 billion. There isn't one company in America
2 that wouldn't be thrilled to be asked for 1.6 billion
3 and be forced to settle for only 1.1 billion.
4 Exactly who was relieved here? It sure wasn't us.
5 Still that wasn't enough. Here they
6 come. They are asking for another quarter of a
7 billion. So much for the relief package. If this
8 was such a great deal for taxpayers, why did the
9 Senate president, Emil Jones, who just happens to be
10 Ameren's and ComEd's largest donation recipient by
11 far, why exactly did Emil Jones feel the need to make
12 a one-man stand and use a parliamentary procedure
13 that has never been used in the history of the
14 Illinois legislature to block that rate freeze. One
15 man stopped every one of these politicians who said
16 they were fighting for Illinois taxpayers. One man
17 all by himself stopped the entire legislature in
18 their tracks. How can that be? That alone is enough
19 to tell everyone here that that deal was rigged from
20 the beginning.

21 Ameren is already collecting more than
22 enough from Illinois taxpayers to cover the costs to

1 provide reliable services and make a healthy profit
2 for their stockholders. But here we are, forced to
3 listen to them put their spin on all this.

4 Of course, they are going to deny
5 every bit of this. Their people are going to tell us
6 AmerenIP is barely getting by. They will give us
7 improper accounting proposals. There will be
8 omissions. They will overstate costs and understate
9 their bank accounts, just as they have done in
10 Missouri, just as ComEd is doing up north right now.

11 Ameren has experienced record profits
12 for the last ten years, but Ameren is smart. Power
13 companies are smart. They branch out into small
14 companies. They tell us they are losing money. They
15 tell us they are going broke. They tell us they need
16 to lay off people or even file bankruptcy. But they
17 can twist the numbers anyway they like. The truth is
18 Ameren is making money hand over fist. They wouldn't
19 have bought Illinois Power in the first place if it
20 was a losing proposition. This wasn't a calculated
21 risk on their part. They did the study, crunched
22 numbers. They knew damn well they could get in the

1 Illinois market and target certain politicians and
2 throw wheel barrels full of money at them and raise
3 our rates. They knew they could not only get the ICC
4 to allow them to manipulate prices with the reverse
5 auction, they also knew that they could branch off
6 another company and sell the electricity right back
7 to themselves for twice what it costs them to produce
8 it. What a deal for them. Ameren had a plan for
9 Illinois, and so far it is working to perfection.
10 Why can't the ICC see this? Because we sure can.

11 Ameren already has a monopoly, a legal
12 monopoly. Deregulation didn't work. ComEd and
13 Ameren swallowed up all the energy companies in
14 Illinois and have been strangling Illinois taxpayers
15 ever since. For them to have the gall to come in
16 here and ask for another rate increase is not only
17 absurd, it contradicts everything they have told us
18 about rate relief. They have been forced to return
19 488 million of the 1.6 billion. Now they turn right
20 around and ask us for half of that money back.
21 Haven't we given them enough? Does the ICC really
22 need to allow them to take another quarter billion

1 out of the Illinois taxpayers and out of the Illinois
2 economy? No. The answer is no.

3 Thank you.

4 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Scott.

5 Kenneth Dunahee. Kenneth

6 D-U-N-A-H-E-E?

7 Alray Zipfel or Frank Zipfel.

8 MR. ALRAY ZIPFEL: Good evening. Thank you.

9 What I would like to speak a little
10 bit about tonight is the accountability and
11 responsibility.

12 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Could you --

13 MR. ALRAY ZIPFEL: My first name is Alray,
14 A-L-R-A-Y, last name, Zipfel, Z-I-P-F-E-L.

15 I would like to speak a little bit
16 about accountability and responsibility. I don't
17 know about anyone else. We have heard a lot of
18 stories tonight about people struggling to make their
19 payments on these outrageous bills. I know I for one
20 struggle month to month. I wrap up in bundles of
21 clothes. It is kind of like we are headed into a
22 third world country. And I frankly wonder how you

1 people sleep at night thinking about the babies, the
2 senior citizens, the older people, that are trying to
3 keep warm, that are struggling from month to month to
4 make these payments, and to stay above water.

5 I know this is all about big business
6 and about greed. And it is not just Ameren. It is
7 all big business. No one wants to accept a cut in
8 big business. It is all the little guy has to
9 continue to pay. It all trickles down to me and the
10 rest of us in here and accountability and
11 responsibility, and we all will answer to that one
12 day. And if you all can go to bed at night and be
13 comfortable with the decisions that you make
14 regarding this, then you have to live with that.

15 So, frankly, I really don't have much
16 more to say because everything else has been said
17 tonight, and I thank you for allowing me to say what
18 I had to say.

19 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Al.

20 Frank Zipfel. Frank.

21 MR. FRANK ZIPFEL: My name is Frank Zipfel,
22 Z-I-P-F-E-L.

1 I just want to say I am on disability,
2 me and my wife. And we make about 35, 38,000 a year,
3 and we can't make it. If the rates go up again, we
4 will completely lose our home and everything. And I
5 feel it's not necessary to have a rate increase.
6 This is ridiculous. There is people out there who
7 are so poor they can't even -- they have to sleep in
8 the streets. They don't have a roof over their head,
9 and you know that.

10 That's all I have got to say. And
11 where is the assistance. Somebody said you can get
12 assistance for 55,000? Well, I called up and asked
13 for assistance. They laughed at me. Now, I thank
14 you for that, too.

15 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Frank.

16 Ronald Martin.

17 MR. MARTIN: Yeah, it's Ron Martin,
18 M-A-R-T-I-N. I'm from Caseyville.

19 A lot of things have been covered
20 tonight, but I will touch on them briefly. I was a
21 career project manager for SAS Electric who was a
22 preferred electrical contractor for Ameren, worked on

1 a lot of their projects throughout Illinois and
2 Missouri. And I saw this shell game coming a long
3 way back. This regulated-unregulated power house
4 supplier bullshit, it was a shell game. Everybody
5 knew it was.

6 When I made out my billings every
7 month, I had to be told is it going to the regulated
8 side or the unregulated side, you know. There is a
9 whole lot of tax advantage here for us. And along
10 with it I worked for a contractor. That's my job.

11 But like I say, I saw it coming. I'm
12 kind of disappointed in myself for that. Everybody
13 knows it is nothing but greed, a big money grab.
14 Every year those guys are bragging to me, hey, you
15 know how much money we made? Another 400 million
16 this year. Eliminated about 200 jobs. But the
17 company is doing good and our shareholders are making
18 lots of money. And that's what it is all about.

19 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Ron.

20 Ken Strong.

21 Liz Poole.

22 Edward Elmore.

1 MR. ELMORE: My name is Edward Elmore. I am
2 from Belleville, Illinois. E-L-M-O-R-E.

3 I have listened to a lot of very
4 knowledgeable, experienced, effective and concerned
5 people this evening, and I actually tailored some of
6 the things that I really wanted to say so I won't
7 burden the people in this meeting with them any more.

8 I just got three basic questions that
9 I would like to be answered either by the Commission
10 or by Ameren. And that is, we have heard terms this
11 evening about competition and monopolies. Well, as
12 best as I can discern what Ameren is, it is a shared
13 monopoly regulated by the state or some other
14 government. It is a shareholder-owned regulated
15 monopoly. And if I am wrong about that, then
16 somewhere down the line when all these questions are
17 answered, I would surely like to hear the final
18 answer to that.

19 The second question that I have got
20 for Ameren is, well, we heard you talk this evening
21 about you needed a seven percent return on your
22 investment. And then you put a dollar bill up there

1 split three ways. Well, my question is, which part
2 of that three-way dollar are you going to apply that
3 seven percent to or are you going to apply it to the
4 seven percent of the whole? Because that's a lot
5 more money than the seven percent to any one of those
6 pieces. So I would like to have some clarification,
7 and I believe that that's the way you laid that out
8 earlier this evening, is that right? The dollar
9 bill, you split it up in three?

10 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Well, we will do that
11 in the question and answer period in just a few
12 minutes.

13 MR. ELMORE: So I would like that clarified.

14 The other question that I have is, I
15 have heard some statements about people who are
16 affected by rate increases, not only by Ameren, by
17 other utilities as well. And I heard some figures
18 mentioned about CDs and people living off of Social
19 security. If you are living off of Social Security,
20 you are dead in the water right off of the bat
21 because you are not able to make it right now. You
22 are on relief in one form or another or else you have

1 somebody helping you out. I can tell you that right
2 now.

3 There are a lot of people who are
4 fortunate enough to be able to have some form of
5 401K, CDs, money markets or other financial
6 instruments that they invested in prior to their
7 retirement. But unless I miss what I have been
8 reading and since I am one of those and I pay pretty
9 much attention to it, you are lucky if your overall
10 return on all those instruments, regardless of what
11 they were, are three and a half to four percent. So
12 in comparison to a seven percent, that is a big
13 difference. And that difference of three percent and
14 the marginal propensity of what your overall income
15 is could very well affect you a lot more than what a
16 lot of people think.

17 So I would like to somewhere, either
18 this evening or somewhere in the paper or somewhere
19 down the line, to have some of that clarified for me.
20 Because right now there is no way in the world that I
21 can believe that Ameren has experienced the type of
22 financial problems that would merit their coming

1 before the Commission and asking for that type of a
2 rate increase.

3 Thank you very much.

4 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Edward.

5 The next name, Don, it's R-E-N -- and
6 it's from the Original Springs Hotel.

7 Rose Mary Aiello.

8 Ed Ford.

9 MR. FORD: My name is Ed Ford. That's E-D,
10 F-O-R-D. I am not related to Henry Ford or if I was,
11 I wouldn't be here.

12 Most everything that I wanted to say
13 has been said, but I wanted to mention that this has
14 been very, very poorly planned. The people here --
15 if you thought that this room was going to hold
16 everybody that's here, there is something wrong. Or
17 you were very smart. I am sure there is people
18 leaving now that are tired of waiting. Why couldn't
19 we have this like in a high school that would hold
20 like 500, 600, 700. I am sure this was planned very
21 smartly. I am fed up about it.

22 To sum it up, Ameren pays a \$2.54

1 dividend. That's good. Most companies do not pay
2 \$2.54 dividends, if you would look at the stock
3 market. Has Ameren ever thought -- possibility, I
4 don't know, I am just asking -- of a stock split,
5 maybe a two for three, a one for three, two for one,
6 I don't know. But by having a stock split I feel
7 that it would generate, possibility, a billion
8 dollars for operating expense, instead of coming on
9 to the people of Illinois and St. Louis.

10 Think about it, buy a stock -- oh, I
11 am sure the employees of Ameren will be extremely
12 happy. But at the same time I feel like by doing
13 that, it would generate a large sum of money that was
14 coming in because there is people that could afford a
15 cheaper stock as opposed to a higher stock. And by
16 purchasing Ameren stock, that's a very good company
17 to invest in. Something to think about. This way
18 you would not come back to the people of Illinois.

19 That's all I have to say. And again
20 this was very poorly planned. Thank you.

21 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: James Harris. James
22 Harris.

1 Lloyd Stancliff.

2 MR. LLOYD STANCLIFF: Ladies and gentlemen,
3 Lloyd, L-L-O-Y-D, S-T-A-N-C-L-I-F-F.

4 In the interest of brevity I have one
5 question. I moved into my home 48 years ago and my
6 average monthly electric and gas cost per month was
7 less than \$50. I still live in the same home. I
8 have had two furnaces. I have a high efficiency
9 furnace. My last bill in February was \$500. I don't
10 know that the increases that have gone in the past
11 are of much importance. The only thing is that
12 everything else has increased 6, 7, 8 percent. And
13 if my electric and gas bill is increased seven
14 percent, I think you are getting enough money.

15 Thank you.

16 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Lloyd.
17 David Stancliff. David.

18 MR. DAVID STANCLIFF: My name is David
19 Stancliff, S-T-A-N-C-L-I-F-F, D-A-V-I-D. This is
20 supposed to be a question period. I have two
21 questions or several questions for Ameren.

22 For Ameren, how dare you? And you

1 have no conscience. And also don't you realize there
2 is a higher power and authority that's higher than
3 your power and authority, that sees everything that
4 you do? And everyone that's with sin and inequity in
5 life, none of us are perfect. But how dare you?
6 That's all I have to say.

7 Thank you.

8 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you.

9 Joe -- 315 Sycamore.

10 Thomas Daly, 1199 McPherson.

11 MR. DALY: First of all, this doesn't have to
12 be on the record. I would like to submit what I am
13 going to read here. I have got three copies, not
14 knowing that there was five in total for the
15 Commissioners, and I hope it is tagged with my
16 narration here this evening.

17 The name is Thomas Daly, D-A-L-Y, as
18 you heard 1199 McPherson. I live in Alton, Illinois.

19 I have a couple documents here and
20 then the letter that I would like to address for the
21 Committee. I sent this short message to AmerenUE
22 when I paid my December electric bill and it reads,

1 "Please forward the two closed articles to Scott
2 Sisel. Dear Mr. Sisel, I assume the Rainwater Ameren
3 mission statement applies to AmerenCIPS as well as to
4 AmerenUE. When you argue your delivery rate
5 increase, please be honest with your presentation and
6 consider rather costs to ratepayers as part of the
7 responsibility of Ameren's presentation." I enclosed
8 a text message in the margin of the Ameren mission
9 statement, and let me read that. "Developed by
10 Ameren's senior team under the leadership of Chairman
11 and Chief Executive Officer Gary Rainwater, Ameren's
12 vision, mission and values are the foundation of our
13 company's future. Ameren's mission is to generate
14 electricity, deliver electricity and distribute
15 natural gas in a safe, reliable, efficient and
16 environmentally sound manner. Our vision is to be
17 the recognized performance leader of the U.S.
18 electric and gas utility industry.

19 "Being a performance leader means we
20 will achieve operational excellence, industry leading
21 customer satisfaction and superior financial
22 performance. In pursuing our mission and vision

1 Ameren is guided by five core values:

2 "Integrity, we will manage our
3 business honestly and ethically. We will always do
4 what is right and take personal responsibility for
5 our actions. We will behave in a way that earns the
6 trust and respect of all our stakeholders and
7 enhances the representation of our company.

8 "Respect. We will treat all people
9 with dignity and respect. We will create a work
10 environment that attracts, supports and retains a
11 high quality culturally-diverse work force capable of
12 meeting the challenges of a competitive environment.

13 "Stewardship, we will build and
14 improve on the business entrusted to our care. We
15 will be good stewards of our stockholders;
16 investments, of our employees welfare and our
17 customers' trust in us to provide their energy needs.
18 We will be dedicated to meeting our social, community
19 and environment responsibilities.

20 "Teamwork, we will work as a team
21 leveraging balance and skills in a spirit of
22 cooperation and trust, holding each other mutually

1 accountable to achieve our common vision.

2 "Commitment, we will commit ourselves
3 to the success of our business, to the pursuit of
4 excellence, to the safety of our employees and to
5 provide an industry leading quality of service to our
6 customers."

7 My question then to Sisel which was
8 responded to was -- this was Rainwater. That's
9 the -- excuse me, he is the St. Louis, yeah, AmerenUE
10 over the corporate umbrella, the big kahuna. Now,
11 "Dear Mr. Daly, January 24," this is by Stan Ogden
12 that was out in the hall. Who is Stan Ogden? Okay,
13 you wrote to me.

14 "Dear Mr. Daly, thank you for your
15 recent note to Mr. Sisel dated December 30, 2007.
16 Mr. Sisel, after reading your letter, referred it to
17 me for a response. Your letter addresses issues
18 surrounding the company's request for a rate
19 increase. First, your assumption is correct.
20 Ameren's mission statement applies to all Ameren
21 companies, including the Ameren Illinois utilities.
22 Ameren's missions and values are shared and upheld

1 throughout the entire Ameren organization.

2 "One of the most important values
3 entrusted to our care is to deliver electricity and
4 natural gas in a safe, reliable, efficient and
5 environmentally sound manner. Achieving operational
6 excellence does not happen by accident. It is an
7 intentional action that requires diligent planning,
8 maintaining the company's infrastructure is it safely
9 deliver electricity and natural gas that is vital to
10 the well being of both our customers and employees.

11 "No one likes paying higher utility
12 rates. The increase we are seeking is to maintain
13 and improve our system. We have experienced
14 increases in the materials we purchase to enhance our
15 distribution systems. The increase to the monthly
16 charges of a typical customer is expected to be less
17 than \$6 per month. We trust that the increase we are
18 seeking will bring increased safety and reliability
19 to our customers for years to come. Thank you.
20 Sincerely," blah, blah, blah.

21 Reading that then takes me to the
22 concept of what Ameren is, legally, here in the state

1 of Illinois. And it is a state-authorized for-profit
2 monopoly. And I suggest that Ameren, if you are
3 going to follow this mission statement and the
4 platitudes that are contained therein, that you then
5 practice what is said there and you open up, as they
6 are saying in the election, complete transparency, no
7 phoney accounting, open up your books, all your
8 profit, all the corporate pay, all the bonuses, all
9 the perks that you guys get -- and you get them and
10 you know it -- and open up and disclose complete
11 interest such as buying -- I was seated earlier out
12 in the hall listening.

13 You buy from your own incestuous
14 corporation umbrella; you buy from your own sources.
15 And you say you just deliver electricity, but you are
16 making money under that Rainwater corporate umbrella.
17 You are making a lot of it. I don't know what the
18 figures are, but you know what they are and you know
19 that is true. I dare you to stand up and deny it
20 later on.

21 Now, in closing, if you want that
22 Commission to grant your rates, then open your books

1 voluntarily as I am suggesting, be transparent.

2 Don't say we are going to wait for legislation to
3 force us to do it. Do it voluntarily if you follow
4 that mission statement.

5 I sent to Gary or to Scott Sisel also,
6 and maybe it was a little bit immature of me but I
7 was upset at the time, an article about -- and I am
8 sure you folks are aware of it -- the Hannah Montana
9 thing out of Houston, Texas, where a mother on behalf
10 of her six-year old girl, her daughter, had them
11 write a letter to the store or the chain of stores
12 that were sponsoring four tickets and airline tickets
13 and four tickets to the concert sold out up in
14 northern New York. And she wrote in there that the
15 girl's father, signing off as the six-year old, had
16 died in Iraq in April of '07, and it was discovered
17 that was a big lie. It wasn't true.

18 And I suggested in a commentary to
19 Mr. Sisel, I wasn't suggesting he was lying, but I
20 said isn't it a shame that our country is reaching
21 this low level of dishonesty, and God save us if
22 that's where we are going. And you people practice

1 your ethics as you were taught back in your college
2 years and do the right thing.

3 Thank you.

4 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Tom.

5 Ron Hageman. Ron Hageman.

6 Ruby or Kurt, and I can't read the
7 last name.

8 MS. LUEBBEN: Luebben. Good evening.

9 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: That's all right.
10 Pull it down a little bit. Pull it down.

11 MS. LUEBBEN: Okay. I am Ruby Luebben,
12 R-U-B-Y, L-U-E-B-B-E-N, and I just have a few things
13 to say.

14 First to the ICC, I want to voice my
15 objection to a rate hike. And to Ameren I have three
16 suggestions, cut out the ads. Since nobody is in
17 competition with you, cut out those ads. Cut out the
18 lobbying and cut back on profits.

19 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Ruby.

20 Rodney Rogger. Rodney Rogger.

21 Larry Moore.

22 MR. MOORE: My name is Larry Moore, L-A-R-R-Y,

1 M-O-O-R-E.

2 And I want to second what somebody
3 said before about -- I know you were saying you are
4 going to have three more of these meetings. I
5 suggest, given the turnout you have here, you might
6 want to reschedule them in a larger room next time,
7 not have everybody packed in the hallway outside.

8 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: I will take that under
9 consideration. I was the one that scheduled the room
10 tonight, no one else.

11 MR. MOORE: And I can understand you might
12 think maybe a lot of people wouldn't show up, but I
13 think we have a lot of fervor in this state over
14 this.

15 I think it is breathtakingly audacious
16 for Ameren to have the nerve after the rate increase
17 of last year to ask for yet another one. The
18 deregulation process started in Illinois in 1997 was
19 supposed to lead to competition. But instead has
20 given power in 2008 to what is in effect, if not
21 actual fact, a monopoly, Ameren.

22 One gentleman before me talked about

1 the nature of corporations. Well, the nature of
2 monopolies, look at American history, is to get as
3 much as possible. In fact, regulatory agencies like
4 the ICC were set up to protect consumers, the average
5 citizens who do not have the wherewithal to hire
6 high-priced lobbyists and make large donations to
7 politicians against just this sort of thing.

8 We see all kinds of ways to juggle
9 financial figures to make an entity, in this case
10 Ameren, look poor and needy. Last year during the
11 rate relief negotiations Ameren would say oh, no, we
12 can't do this and oh, no, we can't do that. Guess
13 what? Some of those things they said they couldn't
14 do, surprise, they did under the final negotiated,
15 quote, rate relief, unquote, plan.

16 It is said figures lie and liars
17 figure. We ask you, the ICC, to protect us, the
18 citizens of Illinois, from the greed of Ameren and
19 reject this increase.

20 Thank you.

21 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Larry.

22 Donna Margiotta, M-A-R-G-I-O-T-T-A.

1 Harold Ables.

2 The next one I just -- I think the
3 last name is Huber. Starts with a W.

4 Ron Trame.

5 MR. TRAME: Yes, it's Ron, R-O-N, Trame,
6 T-R-A-M-E. I live in rural Lebanon.

7 One thing I would like to do is get
8 the Ameren accountants to do my taxes for me.
9 Because if they would do that, I would save enough
10 money, I would have no problem paying my bills. They
11 did a wonderful job. I like the way they did that.

12 I am a little shocked. I came here
13 and I listen out in the hall, hearing that if I made
14 \$50,000 a year, I could get help with my power bill.
15 If a family of four made \$80,000 a year, they could
16 get help on their power bills. There is something
17 wrong with a country, with this country, if I am
18 making 50 grand a year and I can't pay my power bill,
19 number one. And, number two, if the government is
20 stupid enough to help me with it, this is the
21 problem.

22 A lot of people are complaining about

1 Ameren. The problem here is Ameren is a corporation
2 trying to make money. They have got to make a
3 profit. I understand that. I am in the stock
4 market. A lot of us, even though you don't realize
5 it, are at fault for this. If you have a mutual
6 fund, there is a good chance you own utility company
7 indirectly. You want to make money. I want to make
8 money. We all want to make money.

9 The problem is the politicians. It is
10 a regulated utility. And what part of regulate does
11 the Commerce Commission not understand? They are not
12 doing a good job. The politicians, politics -- a
13 long time ago I thought I would want to get into
14 politics at some point in time. I got elected to the
15 local school board, spent four years there,
16 discovered after four years I couldn't lie, cheat and
17 steal good enough to be good at this. Obviously,
18 those that are there now are doing a better job than
19 I could.

20 And I am not trying to insult our
21 politicians. What our politicians need to look at,
22 and I am talking all of them, nationwide, here, the

1 Commerce Commission, everybody needs to learn their
2 history book. Every government in history has
3 failed. The thing that scares me is things like this
4 tell me this one is failing. We don't want to be
5 here when it fails. I want to be buried in the
6 ground when this system fails. It is the best
7 government in the world, at least it has been.
8 Things like this, these kind of problems, when enough
9 people can't pay their bills, Ameren is gone. Trust
10 me. The whole system fails. If enough people cannot
11 pay their bills, this will happen.

12 The public service commission needs to
13 do their job. If they don't, something will be done
14 about it. Revolutions have happened over less.

15 Thank you.

16 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Ron.

17 Ron Davinroy, D-A-V-I-N-R-O-Y. I told
18 you I would mess them up.

19 MR. DAVINROY: First name Ron, R-O-N, last name
20 is Davinroy, D-A-V-I-N-R-O-Y.

21 The last ten years I have been with a
22 large financial firm as a financial advisor. Twenty

1 years prior to that I worked for Ameren Electric in
2 management, and you might say that I have been well
3 schooled in business ethics. That means full
4 disclosure. In my business full disclosure, if you
5 miss doing that, you could be sued and also lose your
6 license which is a very serious matter.

7 So one of the things I was hoping to
8 hear when I got here tonight was full disclosure, and
9 what I have here is some things from an investment
10 standpoint that hasn't been stated yet that you might
11 find of some interest.

12 If you listen to the Ameren
13 presentation to start with and looked at their
14 literature, their financial plight would certainly
15 bring tears to a glass eye. It is sad. Now, they
16 have revenues, current revenues -- this is published;
17 you don't have to believe me, you can look it up on
18 the internet -- \$688 billion was their revenue, their
19 earnings were 558 million, earnings per share 2.76.
20 That's \$2.76. Their 52-week share price range was
21 between the low 40s to the mid 50s. It's been
22 averaging in the mid 40s lately which means that the

1 dividends they pay of \$2.54 cents on 208 million
2 shares is \$528 million. That's 90 percent of their
3 earnings.

4 Now, that's one of the questions I
5 asked Ameren on the phone yesterday. Tim Fox told me
6 that the directors decide how much dividend is to be
7 paid to the investors. That amounts to 5.73 percent.
8 Now, if you look at the banks, you know, you are
9 lucky to get four percent on a CD now. 5.73 is
10 pretty good. When I was still in the investment
11 business, until I retired at the end of this last
12 year, Ameren was on a buy list. We thought it was a
13 good company. Two reasons, they make a lot of money.
14 Secondly, they have all kinds of ways to get their
15 rates up. And that goes with a lot of utilities that
16 I could mention, but it is especially true of Ameren.
17 They are very, very solid financial company.

18 They have some rather nice
19 organization running it. Their CEO, Mr. Rainwater,
20 makes 3.2 million, 3.24 million to be exact.
21 Mr. Voss, COO, Chief of Operating Officer 1.2;
22 Mr. Baxter, Chief Financial Officer, 1.27 million;

1 Mr. Sullivan, general counsel, 950,000 and change;
2 and the senior VP, Mr. Naslund, is a little over
3 three-quarters of a million. So it totals up to
4 about seven and a half million, and that's what
5 published. Now, there are seven V.P.s that aren't
6 even mentioned as far as how much they are paid.
7 There is 13 directors and there is eleven -- excuse
8 me, two subsidiary presidents of whom I presume you
9 buy power from their organizations.

10 My suggestion from a business
11 standpoint, a business ethics standpoint, we are
12 going to try to justify need. You might think about
13 telling the whole story. This is just part of it,
14 and most of this has been discussed tonight. But
15 these are some raw figures that you can't deny. It
16 is financial data. It is available for anybody that
17 wants to look for it.

18 And I have a second question that I
19 would like for you to address publicly, maybe in the
20 newspaper. That would be when we built our house,
21 you said if you make it all electric, we will make it
22 special rates, and we did. Well, I think the word is

1 "renig." They didn't keep that up. They stopped
2 that. They said, "Well, we changed the rates." I
3 said, "I know. They are changed. They are up. I
4 have seen a hundred percent increase in my bill in
5 some months."

6 Mr. Fox also told me that he couldn't
7 find the original planned rate change. He was
8 supposed to call me back today but he did not, so I
9 will be talking to him tomorrow. Maybe everybody
10 would like to have an answer to this. But at any
11 rate, since we are all tightening our belt, let me
12 suggest and just ask Ameren to consider let's try to
13 get a little more efficient. We can all tighten our
14 belt. And the popular political slogan today is
15 "change you can believe in." I don't think we have
16 believe a whole lot of anything that's being said by
17 the people who are presenting their need for a rate
18 increase. But the openness and the transparency is
19 extremely important.

20 The last thing is, it would really be
21 nice if you had more people here tonight to hear this
22 because these folks are sincere and they have

1 problems and they want to see something done. There
2 is a lot of them that are getting ripped off.

3 Thank you.

4 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you.

5 Patricia Owens. Patricia Owens.

6 MR. STELLWAG: Excuse me, sir, I am on the
7 list. We need to get her home. May I speak out of
8 turn?

9 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: What's your name?

10 MR. STELLWAG: Jeremy, last name is Stellwag.

11 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: That's fine. I will
12 let you go ahead.

13 MR. STELLWAG: Very well. Firstly, I would
14 like to apologize for having a wet baby in my arm.

15 I don't dare to think I am any more
16 eloquent than anybody else who's been up here, so I
17 won't rehash what any of the rest of them has said,
18 but I would like to make a couple of quick points.

19 Number one, I assume everybody on this
20 side of the room and that side of the room are very
21 well educated individuals. Some of you may have
22 heard of a gentleman by the name of John Rawles (sp).

1 He wrote a book; it is considered the tome on
2 democracy. It is called The Theory of Democracy.
3 And in it he states a theory that justice is fairness
4 and basically a democracy is the best exercise of any
5 ideal of justice as fairness, in other words
6 everybody has a say.

7 Basically, the bottom line of the
8 theory is that you can't give away your rights for
9 profit. I am not sure what democracy Ameren lives
10 in. But I am pretty sure it is the same one the rest
11 of us live in. It is the same one that John Rawles
12 lived in when he wrote this book and it is the same
13 one that he used as the basis for his book. That
14 would be the United States of America.

15 We are all citizens of that country.
16 We are all citizens of this state. And, therefore,
17 we cannot give up our right to warmth, our right to
18 comfort, our right to our home, house, you know,
19 life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in this
20 day and age. You cannot have that without power.
21 You cannot have that without gas. You can't.
22 Otherwise, you are living in a hovel heated by

1 burning wood.

2 Basically, the bottom line that I am
3 trying to make here is just because you think we can
4 sell our rights out for your profit doesn't mean that
5 we can, and according to John Rawles, who every
6 single physics teacher I have ever known quotes as
7 gospel, you physically cannot. You are asking us to
8 do the impossible. That is not fair. That is not
9 democratic. Just because you think we can, does not
10 mean that we should.

11 Lastly, I would like to ask you a
12 question that was asked by a very brave man back in
13 the late '50s, and I apologize that I can't quote the
14 exact year. During the entire red communist scare,
15 somebody stood up in front of Congress and looked at
16 Senator McCarthy and asked him a very simple question
17 that I will ask you.

18 And before I ask you this question I
19 will state that you are in a sticky situation. You
20 can't shut off power. You are in a sticky situation
21 such that you cannot not make a profit. The Illinois
22 Commerce Commission is in a sticky spot because they

1 are stuck in the middle between politics, between you
2 and between us. I don't envy any of you. I also
3 don't want to be any of you, and I also don't feel
4 sorry for any of you.

5 I will ask you a question that was
6 asked of Senator McCarthy, and that is simply do
7 you -- have you no shame? It is that simple.

8 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Jeremy.

9 Forrest Attaway.

10 MR. ATTAWAY: No thanks.

11 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: LeVerne Wizard.

12 MS. WIZARD: Yes, sir. Thank you first of all
13 for having the opportunity to do just about all that
14 we can do about the situation and that is so that our
15 voice be heard.

16 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: LeVerne, could you --

17 MS. WIZARD: I am sorry, LeVerne,
18 L-E-V-E-R-N-E, Wizard, W-I-Z-A-R-D. I live in East
19 St. Louis, Illinois.

20 But I guess speaking out is probably
21 the only good thing it is going to do is to help my
22 ulcers and my acid reflux. I doubt it is going to

1 help with a rate increase. But I do stand and join
2 all of those who came before me to say that I am
3 opposed to it. And I have sat very patiently to get
4 this opportunity, and I will try to be respectful of
5 the other people and stay within my two minutes.

6 Someone mentioned about the timing of
7 the hearing and the place. Albeit on a Wednesday
8 night at seven o'clock, the first Wednesday of Lent
9 for anybody who is a Christian in the house, you can
10 feel with me on that. I am a member of the Catherine
11 Dunn Center for the Arts and Humanities Board. I am
12 a member of Trinity United Methodist Church in East
13 St. Louis. I teach school, ninth grade, language
14 arts in East St. Louis, Illinois, School District
15 189. I am president of the Olivette Park
16 Neighborhood Association. I am saying all of that to
17 say I wear a lot of hats, and everybody is feeling
18 the crunch of the rate increases that continually
19 spiral upward.

20 Everything is going up except our
21 salaries. The last two years ago we were able to get
22 a three-year contract and I think we got three, four

1 and four, and I think what you are saying is you are
2 going to be asking for something like about seven
3 percent. We didn't even get half that.

4 My other point is I guess there are
5 not any companies to pass this onto, the rate
6 increase, because we have run all of the companies
7 out of the state and out of the Midwest because
8 everything keeps going up and their costs keep going
9 up, they can't make a profit, so a lot of them have
10 left. So I guess we can't pass this onto anybody but
11 us as the consumer.

12 Secondly, it seems that the people who
13 can least afford to pay the higher rates are the ones
14 who always get the higher rate put on them. Those
15 people who are disenfranchised and who make less are
16 the ones who live in the area where the rates are the
17 highest. I have friends who live in areas
18 surrounding East St. Louis, and while our rates are
19 high, they are higher than any of my friends. And we
20 talk about this across coffee breaks.

21 The last thing that I want to mention
22 is the budget plan. It is good of AmerenUE to allow

1 those of us who try to live on a budget to pay you so
2 much per month. When I moved back here to East St.
3 Louis in 2003, I was paying about \$65 a month for the
4 budget plan. It started to go up. Last year it was
5 81. Now it is 85. But at the end of that year I
6 owed you something like \$293.12. You wanted all of
7 that money then because that's what I was behind
8 because I was paying budget by paying a fixed amount
9 every month. And then you didn't want to really work
10 with me to work that extra \$300 into my budget. I am
11 used to paying \$70 a month; all of a sudden you want
12 me to pay you 293, and you only want to offer me
13 three equal payments to do it. Otherwise, you are
14 going to threaten to shut off my service.

15 No one can live without lights, gas,
16 water. We all know that. We are at the mercy of the
17 utility companies. Everything is spiraling like I
18 said except our salaries. Health insurance is going
19 up. All of the stress that is put on us because of
20 the rising costs and the ability to pay our bills
21 causes more stress, and health insurance is going up,
22 and it is just like that little fable about the tiger

1 going around and he kept going around with the
2 butter. There is no end. He just ended up he melted
3 away into a big pound of oil on the ground.

4 I beg you to find other ways. I mean,
5 smart people can always think of ways to do things
6 other than what seems so obvious. Sit down, go on a
7 retreat, take some of that money, go on a retreat and
8 come up with some innovative ways to help save and
9 cut costs and not always pass it on to the consumer.

10 I thank you for your time, but I would
11 join a couple other people who said next time let's
12 have it maybe on a Saturday morning at Belleville
13 West or East where people who work -- I have got to
14 try to get up and meet these ninth graders in the
15 morning. Thank you for your time, and I do hope you
16 will consider not raising the rates any more.

17 Thank you.

18 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, LeVerne.

19 Catherine Kreher. Catherine.

20 Donald Brown.

21 MR. BROWN: Donald Brown, D-O-N-A-L-D

22 B-R-O-W-N. I have got a cold. Here can I give you

1 that? That's just a little paper I would like you to
2 hold on to.

3 This is the power rate to climb up to
4 55 percent. That was a year and five months ago.
5 You can expect to read another one in the paper
6 probably in six months saying Ameren probably got --
7 let's say they probably got 140,000, and we are all
8 going to be sitting here saying, oh, man, did we do a
9 deal on them, saved a hundred million dollars. They
10 only got 140 million.

11 I hope -- no, I am cynical. I hope
12 that this isn't a done deal like I think it is, you
13 know. You know, they ask for twice as much, they get
14 half; that's all they wanted anyway. And ICC goes
15 along with the program and we are done, and we think
16 we came out smelling like a rose. I don't think so.

17 By the way, in regards to when I came
18 in and said that we couldn't hear out there, I
19 finally figured out this is Ameren and this is IC in
20 here, but it took quite awhile and a lot of people
21 left in between, so at least I figured that much out.
22 We had no visuals. We had no prep here like

1 everybody else did, so that was a bad move. And ICC,
2 I know that if that is how you are doing things in
3 here, I pray to God you are not doing it to us later
4 on, too, because we are in trouble if that's the way
5 it is going to be.

6 We need to do the WalMart strategy I
7 think, ICC. Maybe the idea would be when the seller
8 come in, the company, and they say we are going up
9 five percent this year, WalMart says, no, you are
10 not; you are going to go down five percent, and they
11 do or they are gone. We can't get rid of Ameren.
12 But you can stand up a little stronger, I think, and
13 say, no, you are not; you don't need it. Get your
14 people out there, get with the accountants, shut the
15 doors and find out what the hell is going on.

16 On the meeting, the other idea would
17 be the ICC, maybe you shouldn't be making these
18 decisions any more. Maybe we should change the law
19 so that we, the people, get the vote and put it on
20 the books for a referendum. I wonder which way it
21 would go. I wonder. But every time there would be a
22 rate increase, of course. That way the tens of

1 millions of dollars that are being given to the
2 lobbyists, going to our politicians, good men, a lot
3 of them, or to the ICC, instead, Ameren would take
4 that tens of millions and actually present it to us,
5 the people, and say, "Hey, we really need the money
6 because..." and then we can make up our minds whether
7 or not they should get that money. So maybe we need
8 a whole entire rethinking of this process that we are
9 doing and come up with a new solution for us.

10 That's all I am going to say for now.
11 Oh, and, excuse me, one more thing. People, and Bill
12 who is a Democrat, I know you are here somewhere,
13 AARP is still out there. You can send in any letter
14 you want to the ICC. It says the Illinois Commerce
15 Commission wants to hear you communicate on Ameren's
16 request for a \$240 million rate increase. Please
17 write. It helps. Do your petitions to Tom Holbrook.
18 He's got lists. All you have to do is call up and
19 say I want to sign this. It may not mean a lot. And
20 just like the people who are not here tonight except
21 for one, they are not going to listen to anything we
22 said out here. Somebody here is going to make a

1 little list with items on it that will say 50 people
2 said this, 20 people said that same item, and that's
3 it. They are not going to know what we really said
4 or what is going on because they are not here. I
5 doubt it is being taped. And they don't have the
6 time to listen to all of this anyway.

7 So this is just a process and I hope
8 and pray to God it ain't a done deal.

9 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Ron.

10 Jan Gedda.

11 Clara Cadell. I missed here? Which
12 one? Jan, come on up. Come on down.

13 MS. GEDDA: Jan Gedda, J-A-N G-E-D-D-A, and
14 you are going to love me tonight because I am going
15 to be real quick.

16 I feel as though there are many people
17 here tonight better qualified to speak than myself,
18 but I care. For years, 49 to be exact, I received
19 bills from Illinois Power. No problem. Maybe a time
20 or two that I needed to trim a bush around the meter.
21 And unless I missed my answer, due to my standing out
22 in the hall -- and I am so happy to have done so, due

1 to the interest shown, especially because of the
2 inclement weather, so many people are here. What is
3 our answer or our option to a monopoly? I don't
4 think we got one. Democracy, I love it. I would die
5 for it. I don't think we have an option. You are a
6 monopoly.

7 We are here tonight to show our
8 dissatisfaction with your company, with your service
9 and with the lies. And the bottom line is we don't
10 have a voice or a choice. You are in control. But
11 we were here.

12 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Jan.

13 Clara. You can tip that mic down
14 there. There you go.

15 MS. CADELL: Yes, my name is Clara Cadell.
16 That's C-L-A-R-A, last name is Cadell, C-A-D-E-L-L.
17 I am from Caseyville, Illinois. And this has been a
18 long day for me.

19 At 73 or 72, I am not quite 73, I
20 cannot afford to retire. And on Social Security I
21 get \$890 a month. I am sure none of you are trying
22 to live on that, are paying a \$200 utility, electric

1 bill. I said I hope that the ICC stops all of you
2 with this rate increase. The last one this past year
3 was devastating to a whole lot -- all of us senior
4 citizens that are living on fixed incomes.

5 If this goes through, I will tell you
6 I will be one of the first ones to try to find how to
7 figure out to start a co-op and stop this.

8 Thank you.

9 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Clara.

10 Ralph Musec.

11 James Richter.

12 Helen Hawkins.

13 MS. HAWKINS: Yes, I am Helen Hawkins, Madison
14 County Board Member, District 16. Hawkins,
15 H-A-W-K-I-N-S.

16 I am a politician. I am 78 years old.
17 I struggled to get to the position I did starting in
18 1974, continuously running for the county board to
19 represent the seniors and my constituents. I have
20 put out form letters which I did in March at the cost
21 that I make from the county board. They run about a
22 thousand dollars every time I put out 3,000 of them.

1 I recently mailed out 4,000 form letters that tells
2 people -- it's a direction letter. And it is
3 working. It goes to the state legislators, to go to
4 Ameren and to you people. And I want to tell you
5 that where else in America can we come and the
6 Commerce Commission be here to hear us? I appreciate
7 that very much.

8 I am an old timer. I got to the
9 county board the hard way with less than \$3,000,
10 sometimes \$200. And the reason why, I do not take
11 from corporations. I do not take from anyone. And I
12 do not care to hear the bad words about politicians.
13 There are some good ones. Our legislators have tried
14 to work with us, and maybe we are not happy with
15 everything, but where would we be without CUB,
16 without the Commerce Commission and Illinois Power
17 listening to us, and I hope that you listen.

18 I wanted -- tomorrow is Valentine's
19 Day. Now, this isn't much but it comes from the
20 heart of my constituents, and we hope that you have a
21 heart back and hear our plea.

22 The letter is very simple that went to

1 the folks. I am calling this to your attention
2 regarding the high Ameren rate increase that is
3 planned to take place in October of 2008. I simply
4 cannot afford this increase. Not only will the
5 increase be very burdensome during the winter, I
6 cannot imagine the expense of using my air
7 conditioner when summer arrives. I am pleading for
8 your attention to this very important matter. That
9 comes from myself and the people that I represent.

10 I do have the stockholders -- I am not
11 going to go into that. I don't appreciate Gary
12 Rainwater telling us what we need. I am not going to
13 go into that. I know the Commerce Commission
14 originally was set up to be our watch dogs, and I
15 hope I don't have to come back with a large petition
16 drive to have the Commerce Commission elected by the
17 people. Let's hope that this works. Because with my
18 age, I am going to have a hard time getting around
19 and I will have plenty of help, and somehow we will
20 be back if we are not heard.

21 Thank you.

22 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Helen.

1 Joe Swierczek, S-W-I-E-R-C-Z-E-K.

2 MR. SWIERCZEK: Good evening. Joe Swierczek,
3 S-W-I-E-R-C-Z-E-K.

4 I too am an elected official here in
5 St. Clair County, county board member representing
6 about half of the east end of Belleville. And I came
7 here kind of hoping to hear from the state level of
8 what they can do for us and for the people here. And
9 it's amazing to see the turnout here this evening,
10 more than I was expecting, and the great turnout of
11 speakers. That was amazing.

12 I would like to see it published the
13 amount of money that Ameren has donated to the
14 politicians, the amounts, see that published and
15 maybe people can take a visual of that come election
16 day.

17 And it's been talked about conscience
18 and shame. And obviously I think you treat everybody
19 pretty well equal. I have seen the seniors, seen the
20 military, seen the churches, everybody has got the
21 same take on you. And the bottom line is it's wrong.

22 Thank you very much.

1 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Joe.

2 MR. SWIERCZEK: Excuse me, one last thing, I am
3 not taking a nickle from the power company and from
4 anybody else in this room.

5 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Joe.

6 Jim Setzer.

7 Georgia McCready.

8 Joseph Reed. Mr. Reed?

9 MR. REED: Yes.

10 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Is that correct?

11 Okay.

12 MR. REED: I am Joseph Reed, J-O-S-E-P-H,
13 R-E-E-D. I live in Caseyville.

14 They said before that it was going to
15 be a 55 percent increase last year. Fifty-five
16 percent is less than half. My bill didn't just go up
17 a half; it more than doubled. Then we get this
18 rebate thing. What they are not telling you is that
19 the relief thing, it is just temporary. They didn't
20 roll their rates back. Those rate increases are
21 still there from the last time. They didn't roll
22 nothing back. They just gave a little bit of it

1 back, but they are still charging you those rates.
2 Then they want to raise them again.
3 It is ridiculous. They don't cut down the trees or
4 trim the trees back off the power lines. They say
5 they do, but they don't. You go driving up and down
6 Hollywood Heights, all the streets down along there,
7 and the trees are growing up all over the power lines
8 and the power poles. And that's why we have power
9 outages up there all the time, because they won't do
10 their job. Even though they say they do, they don't.
11 They are just a bunch of liars and we all know this.
12 It is ridiculous. And now they want
13 to say they need more. It is insane. What we need
14 to do is not give them this one but to roll back the
15 other one that they didn't need because they already
16 made more money than they need. I mean, when is
17 enough enough? How much do you have to make?
18 Really, I mean, I live on less than \$50,000 a year.
19 Do any of you? I seriously doubt it. You are
20 nothing but a bunch of liars who want to steal more
21 from us.
22 What I think ought to be done is let's

1 just take the power company away from you all
2 completely. Let the government run it as a
3 non-profit organization where all they do is charge
4 what it costs to run. That's what I think.

5 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you, Joe.

6 Mr. Muhammad.

7 MR. MUHAMMAD: I would like to just first state
8 that --

9 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Sorry to interrupt.
10 Would you spell your name for the court reporter?

11 MR. MUHAMMAD: It is Dawud Muhammad. Dawud is
12 D-A-W-U-D, Muhammad is spelled M-U-H-A-M-M-A-D.

13 I would like to first say that it
14 seems like it is very apparent that this situation is
15 more larger than what we anticipated. You can see
16 that it is more widespread. It is not just something
17 that is an isolated case. It is something that is
18 extremely noticeable.

19 But what I would like to do is just
20 kind of highlight something real quick. I have spoke
21 before at these hearings on both sides of the water,
22 Illinois as well. I spoke before the state capital.

1 And as I spoke, I spoke to the lobbyists as well to
2 tried to send messages through the lobbyists to get
3 them to look at Ameren as well as ComEd, to take into
4 account about putting some mandates upon yourselves.
5 I am talking about looking at some things, and I will
6 go into really quickly about what those details are.

7 But what's happened is that I also
8 filed before the ICC. I own a company which is a
9 solar energy company. As a matter of fact, I am CEO
10 of Dos Divisions Technologies and Janus Solar Network
11 and Associates. And I recently completed a project
12 that was in July, and I called and contacted Ameren,
13 and it is on record through the computer systems as
14 well, so you should have an account number to this.
15 And I asked that for my client they wanted to get --
16 be hooked up to the energy grid. They were not
17 able -- there was nobody -- and even when they had a
18 publication that stated that, you know, they had a
19 renewable energy department, it did not exist. There
20 was nobody. As a matter of fact, it took 30 days
21 before I could hear any response, only after I got
22 the communication from another department that Ameren

1 spoke about anything.

2 I have noticed that they also had --
3 they have information out there on the booths right
4 now for people that is very nice, very close-up
5 customer service, which sounds the opposite of what
6 they are actually experiencing here. But what the
7 problem is, is the information that the ICC, I
8 believe, also from the Senate and the House, passed a
9 new net metering law. That information should have
10 been readily available to every person here the
11 minute that they came through the door so they would
12 know what that metering law meant.

13 And also what I was trying to push,
14 and I mentioned that, that in order for us to create
15 competition in the marketplace because Ameren needs
16 help obviously, we can see that, there are other
17 forces that are moving against Ameren that it could
18 end up in a class action suit. We are looking at the
19 fact that the Anti -- if you look back at the
20 Anti-Sherman Act in regards to the 1917 with
21 Rockefeller, what happens was that under the
22 Anti-Sherman Act that really, if you think about it,

1 he had 90 percent of control. But what it was is
2 that the apparatus at the time for light was kerosene
3 lamps. If you think about what I am saying here,
4 there is a little bit of a paradox here.

5 When I say that they at that time the
6 lights that were provided was through the kerosene,
7 Rockefeller owned it 90 percent. But because of the
8 Supreme Court, it came back and they created the
9 antitrust laws against these issues.

10 We have something here to be concerned
11 with. And what I wanted to say is on top of this
12 issue, that Ameren has to be concerned with their own
13 insurance companies being -- and I don't know, I just
14 recently heard that the Supreme Court just passed a
15 law that stated that in essence the utility -- well,
16 shareholders cannot be held sued even if things were
17 being misrepresented. That was the same thing that
18 they were talking about the foreclosures. But yet at
19 the same time I am talking about even if they were
20 talking about the stocks to the investors, that if
21 they misrepresented their stocks or their shares,
22 that they could not be held liable.

1 But I am saying to you that what's
2 happening is Ameren is opening itself up for a very
3 serious major lawsuit. Let me explain how it could
4 happen.

5 If by chance, and I think that's
6 what's happening is just that the ICC is doing a hard
7 job of balancing out between what the utility company
8 needs and what the people need. So what's happening
9 here is that if we have a major loss of life that's
10 due to what you are hearing right now, people are
11 freezing in their homes and if we have more and more
12 people -- now, the hospitals may not physically look
13 at that. They might look at the contributing cause
14 of the death by means of some other reason, but it
15 could actually be based upon how -- the environment
16 in which these people are living.

17 The human being is a very resilient
18 human being. We are very resilient. But what you
19 have to look at is that even with all the resiliency
20 that you have, when you have these type of unknown
21 variables when you are looking at people who do all
22 the right things, they put the storm doors on their

1 windows, they insulate their homes, they do
2 everything, but all of that has been negated.

3 It is being negated because of the
4 fact that you are constantly seeing annual increases
5 of 20 percent increases. At this point to the ICC
6 and St. Louis Boeing Aircraft Company and Busch,
7 Anheiser Busch, last year made a statement that they
8 cannot afford the rate increases. And I am just
9 showing you that maybe we might have to have some
10 clashes between big corporations and big
11 corporations, because they won't listen to the
12 people.

13 And so the thing is that on top of
14 that not only are we looking at the rate increases
15 affecting and driving out businesses, it has a
16 serious economic impact.

17 I think that Ameren needs help. And
18 what I am saying is that they need our consulting
19 firms to come in. What we have is a centralized
20 energy delivery system. What that means is we have
21 one power plant that is feeding millions of people.
22 That is the quality why people are saying this is

1 contributing to a regulated monopoly. What we need
2 now is to -- we have to be able to come up with a way
3 to create a decentralized form of an energy delivery
4 system by setting up -- and just in case of natural
5 disasters like, for example, people talk about the
6 trees and everything else, but what is not being
7 talked about is that these -- the transformers and
8 all these switches are over a hundred years old
9 throughout the whole entire grid. Those grids are
10 18th century technology.

11 If we can see right now within this
12 last -- within ten years alone, already you can look
13 at wire, you can look at -- what do you call these
14 towers, for example, the wireless towers, they are
15 moving away. They are going to be disappearing
16 pretty soon. Because now everything is moving toward
17 wireless. If you understand what I am trying to say,
18 I am talk about the transmission lines. Everything
19 that you can think of, telephones even to computers,
20 now they have got a computer as thin as this.

21 But yet we keep constantly -- what the
22 ICC is doing is keep going back to them to come up

1 with a solution to a problem that they can't do.
2 Their technology is antiquated. It is 18th century.
3 It is something that started back in the time it was
4 great, it was good, it served a purpose up to the
5 20th century, but it is no longer any good. We have
6 to begin to decentralize. What I am saying to you is
7 in order for us to even talk about creating
8 competition -- and I am not saying to get rid of the
9 existing system, but there is some fundamental
10 problems existing behind them.

11 One is I want to ask and have on
12 record, and I need an answer to this, is that already
13 in the southwest they are saying that the atomic
14 nuclear power plants are due to be shut down because
15 of the water shortage and we are experiencing severe
16 droughts right now, as we speak. They have already
17 targeted 17 power additional power plants that are
18 going to be impacted. Right now you are looking at
19 coal and -- not coal, we are looking at natural gas.
20 And I don't know how much of your percentage that you
21 are purchasing is from coal. I thought I read some
22 material on that. But what I am going to say is that

1 if we continue to have a water shortage and now if
2 you just go with natural gas if they have a war in
3 Iran, what kind of -- how do you report on finding
4 out what that would mean on the supply and demand
5 side to the people.

6 And then when you talk about your
7 liability, your electrical liability standards to
8 upgrading the system, in that report, right after we
9 had that major storm, we had those over 2 million
10 people, due to the heat, to the heat, that it was
11 popping these transformers. The thing is that what I
12 need to know is if -- in your reports you stated
13 Ameren stated that it would take \$100,000 per one
14 mile to replace the existing transmission line as it
15 exists in order to protect it from the weather, and
16 we know the climate change is real. We just heard
17 about 65 people that died down there in Tennessee and
18 stuff.

19 Now, the thing is, is that you say if
20 we are going to be able to protect the existing 18th
21 century technology from the weather, we need to bury
22 it beneath the ground. But now in your report it

1 says it would take one million dollars per mile to be
2 able to bury the cables under the ground. We talked
3 about covering one million miles -- or a hundred
4 thousand dollars per mile covering over 97,000 square
5 miles, it is not economically feasible. It doesn't
6 even make sense.

7 So the thing is that what's going to
8 happen -- I will tell you something else that is
9 going to happen, Ameren, as I was talking to them in
10 30 days --

11 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: We are going to have
12 to wrap this up.

13 MR. MUHAMMAD: Okay, I will make it fast. I
14 will make it real fast.

15 What happens is that I was looking
16 forward to the utility company to come back. They
17 came through and I was able to finally talk to
18 someone after -- within 30 days, after 30 days. I
19 feel that what has happened is how many other people
20 have made a call to here and might have gotten an
21 interest in trying to introduce new technology. To
22 me that is something to be thought on.

1 And I think the ICC -- I am paying
2 money out of my pocket right now to deal with your
3 rebate programs that they have. Out of my office I
4 am paying monthly and just so that I can advertise
5 that what's happened with the net metering law that's
6 going to go into effect April 1 and also trying to
7 warn the people, let them known that April 30 that
8 the money from the rebate program, the \$10,000 to
9 help put the solar in, will be ending the end of
10 April. So you have got the utility -- the net
11 metering law going into effect April 1 and then you
12 have the rebate program going to end at the end of
13 the 30th. So that means that -- you say what I am
14 saying? I need a response on that.

15 But I am saying to you that you could
16 be looking at a class action suit down the road, and
17 it will come fast and unexpected. And I know that
18 you are smart lawyers, but I think this is a
19 situation that could come at you.

20 You mentioned one last thing, and this
21 is it. There was one more last thing that was
22 mentioned to me about Ameren was considering coming

1 up with their own rebate program for renewable
2 energy. If you want to create a better public image
3 or a positive image, why don't you take some of the
4 moneys that you have and maybe look at that or maybe
5 look at the process of helping finance at a low
6 interest loan for those to be an incentive to create
7 energy centralization. It will also serve as a
8 benefit to you, because if you can see independent
9 pockets of different -- if you see maybe so many
10 houses here got solar, so being able to provide
11 power, so when you have a problem which you can't
12 already from your manpower hours to accommodate what
13 the natural disaster can, you can have independent
14 pockets with solar.

15 Because a lot of these municipalities
16 are not prepared. As a matter of fact they are not
17 --

18 AUDIENCE: How is this related to the rate
19 increase with the ICC?

20 MR. MUHAMMAD: Oh, okay. Thank you very much.
21 I just mentioned it because ICC, I am just telling
22 them, I filed a complaint about what they didn't do,

1 okay.

2 HEARING OFFICER BENSKO: Thank you very much.

3 Thank you very much.

4 All right. That was the last person
5 to sign up to speak. So I am going to excuse the
6 court reporter and then we will go into a question
7 and answer period.

8 (Whereupon the public forum in
9 this matter was continued until
10 February 19, 2008, at 7:00 p.m.
11 in Peoria, Illinois.)

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